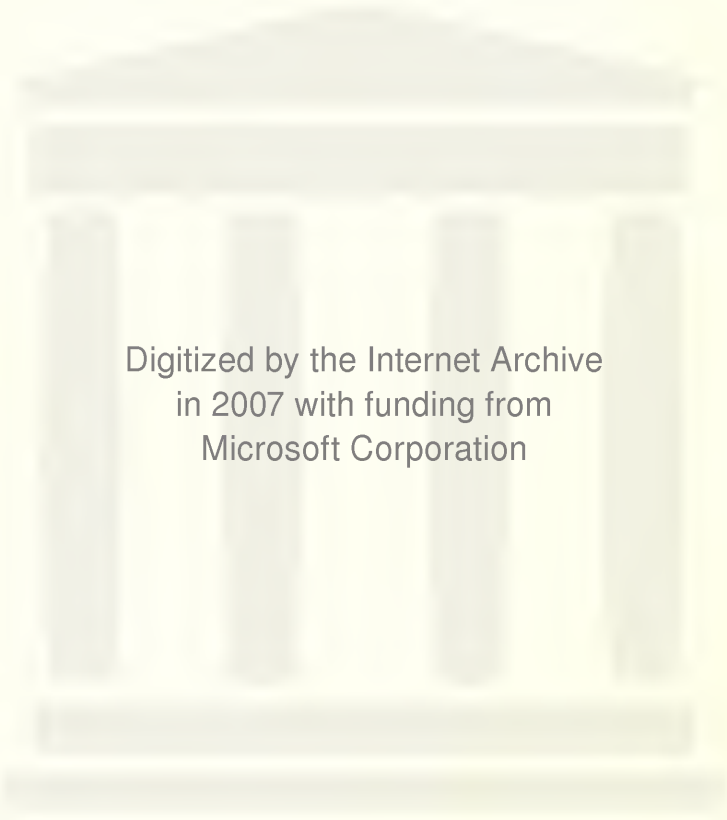

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IN THE

SOCIAL SCIENCES

VOL. 1. NO. 4 DECEMBER, 1912

FRIEDRICH GENTZ

an Opponent of the French Revolution and Napoleon

BY

PAUL F. REIFF, Ph.D.

Sometime Fellow in History

University of Illinois

PRICE 80 CENTS

URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY

1912

STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABBREVIATIONS

Aus dem Nachlasse—*Aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 2 vol., 1867-1868.

Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz—*Briefe von und an Friedrich von Gentz*, ed. by F. C. Wittichen, 2 vol., 1909-1910.

Briefw. zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller—*Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Gentz und Adam Heinrich Müller*, 1857.

H. J.—*Historisches Journal*, ed. by Friedrich Gentz, 6 vol., 1799-1800.

Mém. et lett. inéd.—*Mémoirs et lettres inédits du Chevalier de Gentz*, ed. by Schlesier, 1841.

Schlesier—*Schriften von Friedrich von Gentz*, ed. by Schlesier, 5 vol., 1838-1840.

Weick—*Ausgewählte Schriften von Friedrich von Gentz*, ed. by Weick, 5 vol., 1836-1838.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For bibliography it will be sufficient to refer here to that given by Friedrich M. Kircheisen and Friedrich Carl Wittichen in *Mittcilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, XXVII (1906), 91-146 and 682-694.

Narrow personalities are easy to understand and to classify; rich personalities, on the other hand, seem to defy definition.

That, at least, is one of the teachings that may be derived from a study of the career and character of the publicist, Frederick Gentz. Gentz's life was not an unusually long one, yet it was unusually rich in activities and complex tendencies. But the causes of this lay less in the tremendous vibrations of the era in which Gentz lived than in the man himself; they lay in a versatility of mind which was truly astonishing. An official in the Prussian and Austrian civil services, a diplomatic agent of England

ERRATA

1. Page 30, line 11, for "at" read "the".
2. Page 39, line 3, for "Burke," read "Burke."
3. Page 53, toward end of note 1, for "January 21st, 1702" read "January 21st, 1793".
4. Page 54, line 27, for "couse" read "cause".
5. Page 55, line 20-21, for "Z. L. Huber" read "J. L. Huber".
6. Page 61, line 16, for "Office" read "office";
   line 22, for "Übel" read "Über";
   line 24, for "Herra" read "Herrn";
   line 25, for "Nationalerzichung" read "Nationalererziehung".
7. Page 62, line 17, for "Entstehung" read "Enstehung";
   line 33, for "Teutsche" read "teutsche".
8. Page 67, line 14, for "overpupulation" read "overpopulation".
9. Page 77, line 27, for "refernce" read "reference".
10. Page 88, note 12, for "70," read "70.".
11. Page 89, note 13, for "Tagebücher", omit quotation marks.
12. Page 97, line 31, for "the" read "The".
13. Page 125, line 3, for "entire" read "central".
14. Page 126, line 13, for "is" read "in".
15. Page 136, line 28, for "mostly" read "much".
16. Page 141, line 6, for "first" read "second".
17. Page 143, line 31, for "enrahissement" read "envahissement".
18. Page 153, line 1, for "concession" read "cession".

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The question who Gentz was would thus seem to be difficult to answer. However, if we consider only his political activity and the intellectual traits of his nature, leaving aside its sentimental and social features, the answer will be easier. We will then have the choice between two chief conceptions of the man. One of these would be to see in Gentz an eighteenth century type in general, and a practical exponent of the rationalistic doctrine of government in particular. This conception is in one way undoubtedly the deepest and truest, for Gentz was indeed rooted in the doctrines of rationalism, at least as

regards his political activity. It has, however, one serious drawback, the fact that in its light the life-work of Gentz—his struggles against the Revolution, against Napoleon and for the Reaction—appears as nothing but a mere appendix to his theories; and that, of course, would be a rather abstract way of looking at him. We have thus to turn to the other conception which puts actions first and theories second. Viewed from this angle, Gentz would be seen chiefly as a participant—more or less a negative one, it is true—in the great European movements between the first and second French revolutions.

And thus, it seems, Gentz must indeed be viewed. He was essentially a theorist whom the course of events aroused, but in fact a man of action. He started out with highly idealistic principles, those of human brotherliness and human progress, of liberty, equality, justice and peace. Some of these he retained and championed for many years; others he soon dropped or at least modified, taking up in their stead, as a new principle, the defence of that system which was threatened with overthrow by the events of 1789 and the following decades. The French Revolution, Bonapartism and Liberalism alike were hateful to him; they all meant democracy or at least a drifting towards it, and democracy he abhorred. But his special foe, his nightmare for more than ten years, was Napoleon. On his account he suffered many a bad hour and gained immortality; for such is the character of true greatness that mere opposition to it brings fame. He helped to arouse and to organize the opposition against whatever was revolutionary and aggressive; but nowhere was he more fervent than in his crusade against this hated man and gigantic child of the Revolution. His whole life, indeed, centers about the ten years of his anti-Napoleonic activity.

The following study will, in general, be in accordance with the second of the two conceptions. It aims, in the first place, at a careful representation of Gentz's struggle against the first Napoleon. Its second object—historically the first—is an account of Gentz's relations to the first

French revolution. The introductory chapter will try to give the causes of Gentz's attitude in both cases.

Gentz was born in 1764 at Breslau, the capital of the Prussian province of Silesia, and died in 1832 at Vienna. His father held until 1779 a position in the royal mint at Breslau and then became director of the mint at Berlin; through his mother he was related to the later Prussian minister of state, Ancillon. He received his first education in the public schools of his native city and in the Joachimsthal-Gymnasium at Berlin; from 1783 to 1785 he attended the university at Königsberg, where Kant was still teaching. Entering the Prussian civil service in 1785, he worked during the following years in various central boards of the monarchy. In 1802 he was taken over into the Austrian civil service. His official position there was at first a very vague one; he was attached to the ministry of foreign affairs, the *Staatskanzlei*, but had little to do and nothing to say. After about 1811, however, he gradually became the right hand man of Metternich and was as such of course, important and influential.

I. THE CAUSES OF THE STRUGGLE

1. Environments of the Young Gentz.

Although Gentz was not a Berliner by birth, yet he lived long enough in the Prussian capital to be counted as one. The first *milieu* of his youth was then the Berlin of about the years 1780-1790. Beyond it lay, as larger circles, the condition of Prussia and of the "Empire". Beyond these again extended the atmosphere of European life and thought in general.

Berlin was at the time of the death of Frederick the Great a city of about one hundred and fifty thousand people, the strong garrison included. A modest-sized place then, one might say, if everything had not been smaller in those days. Scenic charms it never possessed, although the near-by Havel lakes are not without their quiet, melancholy attractions. Its streets were none too clean, rather badly lighted and unsafe at night. There were perhaps a few noteworthy buildings here and there, but the general level of architecture was rather low. The present university had not yet been founded; the academies of science and of arts, however, already existed.

The intellectual and artistic life of the city could not claim any special distinction. No famous philosopher or scholar, no great poet or artist lived within its precincts; there were, of course, Nicolai and Mendelssohn, but they could not be called great, and Lessing had long since left the city. Berlin was too new and young, too sober, too busy and too poor to be a centre of learning and of art; it possessed many soldiers, plenty of sand, an invigorating climate and a great king, but no Hesperian gardens and no zephyrs, few books and hardly any history to speak of. Nevertheless, in a certain sense the city could even then boast of intellectual preeminence: it was the center of German rationalism and already endowed with that critical

mind for which it has ever since been famous. Socially the nobility predominated; the other classes—the officials and the professions, the wealthier merchants, the descendants of the French *émigrés* and the Jews—still counted for little. The moral standard was unsatisfactory in many regards, but probably not so bad as anti-rationalists would have it; it had already been on the decline in the later years of Frederick the Great, and under his successor matters went from bad to worse.

All in all, then, it must be admitted that the Berlin of those days was rather uninteresting. One great attraction it did possess, however, and that was Frederick himself. His fame still brought distinguished visitors from abroad; but they came more and more rarely, afraid of disturbing the great man in his work. To the general public the king was generally not visible. At military parades he could, perhaps, be seen, or when he occasionally rode into town; aside from these occasions, however, he never left his beloved *Sanssouci* except for the annual visits to the provinces. He had become a stern old man; a terribly exacting taskmaster whom few loved and all respected. Physical ailments troubled him, his friends had mostly died, and Berlin grumbled; but that mattered little. *Patriae in serviendo consumor*—this was his kingly program, to be observed by himself no less than by his subjects; as for the rest, he was the King, and every malcontent was at liberty to grumble, provided that he obeyed.

The political system of Frederick was in some respects based on rationalistic principles, in others, again, it was shaped according to practical considerations; to call it enlightened absolutism would, therefore, not be quite correct. Frederick maintained a big army; he waged three wars which were, at least in part, wars of conquest; and he thought remarkably little of the individual as such—in all this he was not a rationalist. Likewise, his confirmation of the privileges obtained by the Prussian nobility during previous reigns exceeded that which was permissible from the rationalistic standpoint. On the other hand, Frederick

was in harmony with the latter when he called himself the first servant of the state, when he put the common weal above all private interests, and would allow every one to seek salvation according to his own fashion.

Under his successor, Frederick William II, the general organization of the state was retained, but in less important points changes were made. The two notorious laws of his reign—the ordinances concerning public worship and the censorship of the press—were of great actual importance, but did not affect the formal structure of the state; they proceeded from the individual character of the king or of his nearest advisers and were intended as a blow against the hated rationalism. Although fundamental reforms did not come until after the *débâcle* of 1806, there was, even then, a good deal of discussion whether steps in this direction should not, after all, be seriously considered. Personally Frederick William did, of course, not enjoy the respect paid to his uncle, yet he was not unpopular with his people, rather the contrary, it would seem; but his reign, as a whole, was undoubtedly pernicious to the state. Subsequent events showed that under him Prussian efficiency, thrift and devotion to the common interests retrograded with sinister rapidity.

Beyond Prussia lay the "Empire." It had gradually become the most complicated as well as one of the least important political bodies of Europe. The emperor at Vienna, the diet at Regensburg, the supreme court at Wetzlar, traditions centuries old and the lack of something better kept it, in a way, together; yet its doom was near at hand. Austria, Prussia, and the more important of the smaller German territories had become absolutistic and centralized states; in the "Empire" the old German *Libertät* remained. The emperor still had to be elected, and the case of Charles VII showed that this meant more than a mere formality; he presided over the imperial diet, the strangest element of this strange political organization. This body, in general, contained the territorial lords; but these might be *neutra*, as was the case with the free cities

and perhaps, the free abbots. Represented or actually present were the temporal princes, high and low, the great dignitaries of the Catholic Church, the free abbots, the colleges of the imperial counts, knights and cities, and finally such foreign powers as possessed German territory. The Catholic votes still preponderated numerically; however, that involved hardly any danger to the Protestants, since in strictly religious matters the old *itio in partes* had been retained. As a rule, the august body would proceed with no undue rashness; time-honoured traditions had to be observed, and that being accomplished, little else remained to be done. The weakness and stagnation of imperial Germany resulted, of course, largely from the antagonism between Austria and Prussia. United, these two powers would have presented a most formidable combination, but the time was not yet ripe for that. There were the smaller German states and there was Poland; who would control the one and absorb the other? Neither power was willing to allow the other to do it, and thus the relations between them remained strained, with a tendency to become delicate at any moment.

The internal conditions of the different German territories outside of Prussia and Austria varied considerably. Bavaria stood apart. A Chinese wall was carefully drawn around it to exclude all possibility of protestant, rationalistic or pan-German influences; for these the ruling class considered dangerous. The country was to be their own reservation; besides, it really needed no suggestions from "abroad," being a self-sufficient state and, if you were ready to admit the facts, quite a power. West and north of Bavaria began the "Empire" in the narrowest sense of the word. The common features of this whole part of Germany—it comprised, roughly speaking, Suabia, the Black Forest district, Franconia, the Rhine country, the strip east of it as far as the Weser, and Thuringia—were threefold: the territorial incoherence of all the states, the smallness of most of them and, as regards the population, a certain intellectual liveliness and love of independence.

Take, for instance, the Suabian district of the "Empire"; it contained one duchy, Wurtemberg, forty ecclesiastical territories, thirty imperial cities, many princely seigniories and the domains of the numerous free counts and free knights. Or take the electorate of Mainz; its nucleus consisted of the rich estates in the Rheingau and along the lower Main, but besides these it possessed also Bischofsheim on the Tauber, Starkenburg in the Odenwald, Fritzlar in Hesse, Erfurt, and the whole Eichsfeld. Territories of that configuration and insignificance would, of course, not think of having any independent policy. The smallest of them trembled for their very existence. They, the free cities, knights, counts and abbots, the bishops and petty temporal princes, then the archbishops and ecclesiastical electors mostly attached themselves to Austria, while the larger political states, during this period, sought the protection of Prussia. The nobility was almost everywhere firmly entrenched, if it was not the sovereign itself; in the imperial cities, of course, no nobility in the technical sense of the word existed, but there were the patrician families and in their hands the political power lay. The authority of the sovereign was nowhere unlimited or undisputed; the nobles, the chapters of the cathedrals, the lower classes in the free cities and sometimes even the peasants jealously guarded whatever rights they happened to possess.

Such then were the conditions in the "Empire." They resembled somewhat those of Italy, but aside from this there was not the like of them in all Europe; not even the moribund Poland could be referred to as a parallel. Obsolete and unsound they must have appeared to many; but they had also their attractive sides: they were venerable, interesting and indicative of great regard for historic rights. One of those who felt a sentimental attachment to the "Empire" on account of these reasons was Gentz.

The fact that Germany then was not much more than a geographical notion naturally resulted in a certain quiescence of national pride and sentiment. The poets of

the Storm and Stress and of the Göttingen group—the young Herder, the young Goethe, Schiller during the first years of his literary career, Lentz, Hölty, the two Stolbergs and others—had been fervent pan-Germans; but their patriotism referred more to the German past than to the German present, and they themselves belonged, with the exception of the young Schiller, to the preceding decade. Among the lowest classes there was if any but a local or provincial patriotism. The common theatre-going public, it is true, remained in the eighties as susceptible to the Storm and Stress spirit as it had been in the seventies; yet the numberless knightly dramas which swept the German stage of the time pleased the spectators less by their patriotism than by their ponderous sensationalism. In general, it may therefore be said that the masses were rather void of pan-German sentiment; the attachment to the province, the city, or the state preponderated with them. F. K. Moser, the Suabian publicist and politician, remarked shortly after the close of the Seven Year's War: "Yes, we have a national spirit as we have wine-producing territories and beer-producing territories, at every bend of the road another one." In a similar strain Wieland wrote: "There are, perhaps, Märckian, Saxon, Bavarian, Wurtembergian, Hamburgian, Nurembergian, Frankfortian patriots and so on; but German patriots who love the whole German Empire as their country and love it above everything else, ready to make real sacrifices for it, where are they?" The cultured classes, as a rule, believed in cosmopolitanism: they considered themselves first of all citizens of the world. There existed, however, important sections in this group which were less cosmopolitan than particularistic. The nobles, for instance, thought very little of the citizenship of the world; but, perhaps, they could not be called cultured. Winckelmann, the Goethe of that time, Heinse and the Romanticists of the following decade were, in a way, cosmopolitans too; Germany, at any rate, found little favor in their eyes, being, as they thought, an altogether too cimmerian part of the globe and no home for

the Graces. At the same time, it is true, each of them would love some far-away land beyond the mountains, ancient Greece, Italy, Spain, India, or the Orient in general, which was to him his real, his own country. Leaving these sections aside, there remained, as the bulk of the cultured classes, the out-and-out rationalists; and they were undoubtedly thorough cosmopolitans—men without a country. In Prussia the attachment to the province preponderated: the Pomeranian was first of all a Pomeranian, and the Silesian a Silesian. There existed, however, also a national Prussian spirit and that semi-national feudal bond of loyalty which connected the army with the person of the king.

The French prestige still suffered from the blow of Rossbach, and the internal conditions of France were not such as to raise it; among the literati, Lessing's attacks on the French drama, too, were remembered. Nevertheless, the old Gallomania largely continued; only it had now to compete with a rival, the budding German Anglomania. Shakespeare and Ossian, the idols of the Storm and Stress, disappeared, it is true, for the time being, from the literary horizon together with the windy heaths and foggy shores of their poetry; and likewise the great king felt, in his later years, none too kindly towards the British. But it had become somewhat the fashion to learn English, and at the side of the old French *Mademoiselle* there appeared now, as a governess, the new Anglo-Saxon *Miss*. Englishmen were more frequently seen traveling through the country and they found that reverential treatment which they expected and which they obtained far into the nineteenth century.

German public opinion was not yet strongly developed, and so far as it existed it was rather conservative. Nobody seriously thought of infringing upon the constitution of the "Empire." The system of limited absolutism was even unanimously recommended by the rationalistic political writers of the time. There were a few republicans, some enthusiasts for liberty in general, and numerous un-

willing tax-payers; on the whole, however, the spirit of opposition had been louder in the seventies than it was in the eighties. The condition of the peasants was conceded by many to be hard and indefensible; but these same persons were unwilling to endorse the abolition of the nobility as an institution, for that would have meant a revolution of the whole existing order of things. They favored slight changes; at the same time they considered the existence of a nobility as necessary to the welfare of the state, apprehending that without it the power of the sovereign might know no limits. The attitude of public opinion would thus seem to have been unduly submissive; appearances, however, are often deceptive. It was universally and most strongly insisted upon by all the rationalistic writers on political science that the rulers held their offices only as a trust, to be administered solely for the common weal; they would not have government by the people, but they demanded government for the people.

Intellectually, the years 1780-1790 may, as regards Germany, best be defined as a period of transition. The great intellectual movements of this country during the eighteenth century were rationalism, pietism, *Empfindsamkeit* or sentimentalism, the Storm and Stress, Hellenism, philosophical idealism and romanticism. Of these rationalism had undoubtedly been the most powerful; but its force was spent and it now abated visibly. The German pietism continued to hold its position, and the same may be said about the German *Empfindsamkeit*, inasmuch as the latter became one of the chief sources of the German romanticism; both of them were essentially German movements and thus proof against the flutter of fashion. The Storm and Stress began to decline with the end of the seventies. German Hellenism had already reached its first zenith in the sixties; now it was to experience a second classical age. The year 1781 marked the beginning of the new philosophical idealism, and between 1786 and 1795 German romanticism sprang into existence.

The European movement which is commonly called

that of enlightenment was not a mere intellectual tendency; it amounted to nothing less than a new ideal of civilization. Its three main principles were the primacy of reason, utility, and humanity. Reason had now become the supreme judge in all human matters, and from the verdict of this judge there was no appeal; about that everybody agreed. But what was to be understood by "reason"? Only clear logical thinking, or certain innate ideas and tendencies, or both? Most of the rationalists, especially those in Germany, favored the third of these conceptions. They talked of a natural religion, of natural laws and natural rights, indicating by the epithet "natural" that disregard for these ideals was tantamount to disobedience against nature itself; and to bring humanity under the sway of this nature was to them a most sacred duty. The acceptance of the authority of the Bible and of the dogmas, the reverence for history and for tradition, the belief in miracles, religious intolerance, all and every shade of mysticism, every indulgence in sentiment, and the whole Middle-Age were, therefore, stigmatized as so many aberrations of the human mind. The cultivation of poetry and art in general they tolerated in a way; but only with many reservations. Art was then little cherished in Germany and for this reason left alone. Poetry, on the other hand, had become a matter of great interest to the Germans and could, consequently, not very well be ignored: it had to be advised, and thus the poets were gravely told that passion and sentiment were of no use and their expression, therefore, of still less; that every poem should try to give some profitable instruction and that the best instruction was a moral one. A certain indefiniteness clouded the third of the rationalistic principles, that of humanity. It could mean the ideal of developing all the human faculties, or the doctrine of altruism, or the recommendation of milder habits and manners in general, and in fact it did mean all this; the individual rationalistic writer might have in view only the one or the other of these meanings, but rationalism as a whole stood for all of them. Much enthusiasm was

manifested for the perfection and progress of the human race, for the idea of international fraternalism and for religious tolerance; likewise much interest was shown in the promotion of industry and agriculture. Few, if any, would advocate war and its cause; war was declared to be a waste as well as a crime and unworthy of enlightened men. Everybody, on the other hand, believed in the efficacy of education; training was everything: able men were not born, they were made.

Of particular interest for the student of Gentz's career is the position of the German author of the time. In countries like England and France an author in those days often acquired considerable wealth and political influence. In Germany, however, he was poor and of little consequence in matters concerning the conduct of public affairs; for there the government lay chiefly in the hands of the rulers, and perhaps the only German writer of that age who wielded any real influence upon them was Schlözer in Göttingen. If the conditions were favorable, then an author might, by his writings, obtain some respectable position at court or in the service of the government, as was the case with Goethe, Wieland and Herder; but that could not be depended upon. Schubart, for instance, never attained any such recognition; Lessing died as a librarian in the world-forsaken Wolfenbüttel; and Schiller was at this very time a homeless man, wandering from place to place. Literary careers such as Voltaire's in France could then not be thought of in Germany; even that of Mallet du Pan in the pre-revolutionary Paris would have been well-nigh impossible. Yet the literary career had after all, even in Germany, one very attractive side: it was the simplest and straightest way to fame and to popularity, provided that the writer knew his readers. The German of that day had little interest in politics, but he cared very much for poetry and philosophy; there, then, lay the golden opportunity for the writers, and in this way Klopstock, Gellert, Goethe, Schiller and Kant had become the favorite sons of the nation.

2. Gentz's Character.

To what extent this environment helped to form Gentz's character is, as always in such cases, somewhat hard to say. His theories without a doubt were influenced by it in considerable measure; his character, however, developed more independently. Its chief characteristics were probably inborn, for they remain on the whole as fixed as was possible amid the tumult of such a life and such an epoch. They were characteristics affected by misfortune only temporarily at most, but rather susceptible to sickness and age.

Among the gifts with which fate had endowed this remarkable personality, a fine physique was not the least. Gentz was not really handsome; he possessed, however, captivating eyes and a very pleasant voice. His vitality must have been very great to start with, for despite the magnificent recklessness with which he spent himself in pleasure and in work, he reached, after all, well-nigh the threshold of three score years and ten. The weak point of his make-up was his nerves. He easily lost patience and was fearful of any uncertainty. Wind, rain, and above all storms were highly repulsive to him, and his interest in the condition of the weather is reflected in many of his letters. What he loved was to have a blue sky above him, to see the sun, and to breathe the quiet air; and when he once discovered that a place was meteorologically unsafe, then no amount of feminine charms, no gathering of illustrious names could make him stay there. The restless and at times wild life which he led did not, however, remain without consequences. His finances were almost from the start in hopeless confusion; in 1814 his health, too, began seriously to suffer. From 1825, perhaps, the latter became somewhat improved; but the old strength was after all gone, and at last death came as a consequence of general debility.

Intellect and feeling were equally developed in Gentz. Personalities of this sort are able to avoid the threatening

inner conflict only by allowing both sides of their natures to express themselves, and such also was Gentz's experience. Until 1819, he was firm in his determination to subordinate everything to the judgment of reason; nothing would, however, be farther from the truth than to attempt to term him on this account a rationalist pure and and simple. Even in the sphere of statesmanship, the emotions—confidence, reverence, benevolence and content—were for him factors of the highest significance, and likewise did he feel sentiment to be of the greatest importance in the provinces of art and religion. How much he allowed himself to be influenced by emotions, consciously or unconsciously, in his moods and in his relations with other people, will be seen later. More correctly could we call Gentz, therefore, a sentimentalist as well as a rationalist, recognizing in him one of those complex natures as rich as they are hard to define. In his youth, it is true, Gentz seemed to give little promise for the future, if we are to credit his oldest biographer; a good boy, amiable and easy-going, with but little talent if not actually dull—so the estimates of him run.[1] The judgment of a later biography is, however, rather different; according to it the young Gentz was not at all dull, and well thought of by the teachers of his Gymnasium in Berlin.[2] The two accounts seem contradictory, but in reality both are credible; Gentz may have been easy-going at home and active at school, combining within himself tendencies for pleasure and work in a way which still persisted in later years. From 1793 on, he certainly left no doubt as to his mental capacity, astonishing, we may well assume, not a few of those earlier skeptics.

One of the prominent features of Gentz's character was his love for the discussion of problems. Orally and in writing, in treatises, letters and official notes, he gave way to this passionate pleasure; in the broader sense of the word, he argued almost all his life, with Kant and Hamann

[1]Varnhagen von Ense, *Galerie von Bildnissen aus Rahels Umgang und Briefwechsel,* II, 162.

[2]Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Friedrich Gentz,* I, 8 f.

in Königsberg, with friends such as von Humboldt and Adam Müller, with the Revolution, with the hated Cobenzl and the equally detested Napoleon, in short with well-nigh every one with whom he came into positive or negative contact. His motives in this were sure to be various. One was his interest in the analysis of problems as such, to which we have before referred; a second was his wish to be able to enjoy his dialectic superiority; still another was his endeavor to see his political ideas realized; a fourth, finally, was the great sociability of his nature. With his equals he was in these discussions open and direct; with his superiors, on the other hand, Cobenzl excepted, truly deferential. In all argumentation he was concerned with truth alone. It would have been impossible for him to defend something, of the correctness of which he was not convinced; for that he was far too honest.

Closely related was Gentz's eminent gift of social conversation. It was more necessary for him to speak than to write, and he loved to express himself fully to others or to chat with them even when there was no problem at issue. Whenever he was in the proper mood he could talk very seductively and fascinatingly, and the fact may perhaps be a matter of surprise that he found entertainment among men as attractive as among women. It would be incorrect to term him a ladies' man; but he certainly was a master in social intercourse with women, particularly with those of standing. When he made use of his beautiful eyes, when his gentle voice softly flattered the ear, when he spoke of his boundless devotion or in his spirited fashion discoursed of serious things—then he must indeed have been hard to resist. The circle of his feminine acquaintances was therefore large, reaching almost to the throne, and it is safe to say that without this gift of light as well as of substantial conversation Gentz would not have attained to the illustrious social position in Vienna,—a position which meant so much to him politically—that with its assistance he won so easily.

Speech is not in and of itself, however, of equal importance with thinking; mere words are cheap, but clear, deep, and original thinking is by no means so. How was Gentz's intellect in this regard? It must be granted that he was no intellectual pioneer; he was original, perhaps, in nothing save the combination of the qualities which he embodied, and this he too, honest as ever, has himself granted. To Rahel, his particular confidant, he wrote in 1803: "You are a ceaselessly producing nature, I am a ceaselessly receptive one; you are a great man, I am the first of all women who ever lived. This I know: had I been physically a woman, I should have brought the earth to my feet. I have never discovered anything, never composed anything, never made anything. I am more electrical than metal and just for this reason a conductor of electricity without a second. My receptivity is quite boundless."[3] Gentz was, however, not at all on this account purely receptive. He read much and in this way accumulated material from all sides. This material he carefully arranged and moulded into a pleasing form, the latter point receiving much of his attention. If many of his treatises are notwithstanding not easily readable, this is not due to any lack of clearness of logic, but to the abundance of material; clear writing is often clear because superficial, whereas Gentz was, if anything, thorough. And not thorough alone, but likewise objective, even in the midst of the battle. He would have none of that extremely convenient principle that there are two sides to every question; to him a question might have many sides and ramifications, but there was only one truth and that truth was obligatory upon all. To assume that truth could be established by a majority, by the judgment of public opinion or moreover by the will of the common people was in his eyes both an absurdity and a crime. Principles of this sort he considered empty phrases; and of these he was the most irreconcilable foe. A very valuable intellectual peculiarity which Gentz pos-

[3] Schlesier, I, 113.

sessed was, moreover, his undoubted brilliancy. The animation of his mind, his many-sided interests, his wealth of ideas—secondary and not original, it is true—his ability to use these ideas quickly and fitly, the artistic quality of his conversation, and an undeniable humor—all these combine to give him a claim to be called brilliant. In this respect he was without question an exceptional figure.

As regards the other sides of Gentz's character there is not a little that could be mentioned, for Gentz was anything but narrow and dull. He was possessed of much natural good-nature, much independence of spirit, and much restlessness; besides, he was endowed with an elasticity of temperament which kept him youthful almost to the the last. He liked sensation when not too strong. He deviated not a hair's breadth from his principles; on the other hand, he was entirely lacking in military spirit and feared noisy crowds, unknown faces, age, and death. For nature, especially for his beloved mountains, the "silent, icy" peaks of the Alps as he calls them, he always felt a warm affection, not unlike that of a boy who comes home for a few days' vacation; but above this unadulterated nature he still placed that artistically beautiful nature of the kind that one meets with in architecturally planned gardens. In many regards he was a romanticist in the sense of the two Schlegels, although he expressed himself not infrequently in a rather disparaging way concerning the younger of the brothers and concerning Tieck. He was a romanticist in his inner wealth of life, his warmth of feeling, his reverence for the feminine, his exalted levity, his sense of the poetical and his love for nature, in his occasional need of solitude, in his reverence for the past and in his catholic tendencies, or rather in the combination of all these qualities. If we were to name a single and comprehensive characteristic which above all he had in common with the Schlegels, it would be his antipathy toward whatever was commonplace and philistine. His appreciation of reason and understanding, his energy and

cheerfulness, as well as his interest in politics were, it is true, quite unromantic features of his make-up.

Gentz could apparently not until late in life dispense with social intercourse. Along with his occupation with politics, it was for him the salt of life. The equipment for playing a rôle in social life he possessed with the exception of one thing, noble birth; and this was unfortunately a point to which at that time especial importance was attached. It was therefore necessary for him to make up for the deficiency, as far as this was possible, by falling back upon other personal distinctions which were available and useful to this end. What helped Gentz here most, beyond doubt, was the thoroughly aristocratic character of his whole nature. Intercourse with people who stood outside the sacred circles of high life was under certain circumstances very attractive to him, his intimate relations with Adam Müller and others testify to this; but his real atmosphere was, after all, the perfumed air of the drawing-room. His love of comfort, his absolute light-heartedness, his sense of the artistic, the gentleness of his manners, his egotism and his ambition forced him thither, or at any rate away from the common crowd; he belonged to the *élite* and wanted to belong to them, intellectually, socially and politically. We know how completely successful he was in this endeavor; that he was so, however, especially the manner in which he succeeded in gaining *entrée* into the very exclusive circles of the high Austrian nobility and in establishing there a place for himself, will always be a circumstance for wonder to him who knows the laws and habits of this West-End of Europe. With time, it is true, when he had drunk long enough from this cup of bliss and that old age which he feared so much was gradually drawing on, his love for society life waned very considerably.

In the final analysis, Gentz had, after reaching full manhood, three fundamental ideas: influence, pleasure, and justice; the first two governed his life in general, the third his political theories in particular. He wished to play a rôle in the world and felt that he had the power within

himself to do so; and this rôle was to be principally that of statesman. But he did not entertain such ambitions from the start. To Elizabeth Graun, one of his first loves but by no means his last, he writes in 1785 in a perfectly bucolic, Rousseau-like manner: "Life with four or five excellent people but without compulsion, without restraint in the most unconfined, happy freedom of nature, limited by no considerations of ceremony, embittered by no fear of misconstruction, furthermore in the quiet bosom of sweet, sweet nature—wouldn't that be the only thing which could make such people as we are happy? But tell me, would we wish more, would we not gladly leave all the vain show of the world of fools, all the money to Jews, all the learning to the schools and look from our little happy circle into the big world . . . as occupants of a good, quiet warm room looking out into the autumnal country, where the evening wind in a cold, cold rain drenches the fallen leaves?"[4] Already in 1802, however, he expresses himself to Brinckmann, then in Berlin as envoy from Sweden and always one of his closest friends: "My hour has struck; the course of my long, long youth is ended; I renounce the abundance of life's pleasures and consecrate myself to the serious activity of my head, which is still young. I shall henceforth lead a cooler, more tasteless but, I strongly hope, more uniform and harmonious life; and upon the ruins of all my old inclinations and passions and pleasures there shall be erected nothing but ambition for true fame, and a certain pride, which heretofore has been but repressed for that which really lies hidden in the depths of my soul beneath a quite foreign exterior, shall be exalted."[5] In 1826 he likewise endorses the word of Johannes von Müller, the Swiss historian: "Surely a single good idea, contributed at some time in life at a peace negotiation or in some other important transaction is of greater influence than the arrangement of a whole archive."[6] Next to or

[4] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 67 f.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, 100.
[6] Schlesier, IV, 287.

perhaps parallel with this ambition stood Gentz's love of pleasure, of pleasures high and low. He was a born master of the art of living, knowing how to get out of life all there was in it. "He who expects to enjoy always, never enjoys;" " the sum of all wisdom is: make use of the present!"; "let us live, live and not merely exist"—so he writes as early as 1785 to Elizabeth Graun;[7] and he lived in accordance with this doctrine then as well as later. The third of his fundamental ideals, that of justice, was, as we have already noted, significant directly only for his political theories; since, however, his theories in turn very strongly influenced his political activity, the actual extent of this ideal was in his case much greater. From it, above all, he derived the ever-glowing fire of passion and energy which characterizes his fight against the Revolution and Napoleon; but he had it to thank too for many hours of deep sorrow. It was a help to him, but also a burden and a ballast wich seriously handicapped his actions, as high principles are so likely to do if closely adhered to.

Gentz was a born politician, as he has been called, only in part. Ambition, interest in politics, the needed social talents and a knowledge of the diplomatic language of French he possessed; other quite as important traits of the true statesman, however, he lacked. Above all he was not what the Germans term a *Realpolitiker*, at least not until 1813. He saw everywhere only questions of right, but in politics power is the chief matter. Furthermore, he was not cool enough. The warmth and sensibility of his nature, in itself an attractive trait of his character, stood here in his way. He inclined to strong sympathies and antipathies and could not break off old intimacies or form new ones as quickly as the political constellation of the hour would require; likewise he easily lost his patience and felt ill at ease in the face of the unknown. Metternich was not so far wrong when he remarked that Gentz was always inclined "to view situations in the most lurid

[7] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* I, 73.

colors and to leap from extreme hope to extreme despair."[8] A man with nerves like these and a temperament like his was indeed not to be employed as an independent force in foreign policies. Lastly, Gentz lacked entirely the gift of dissimulation; he could of course keep his peace, but hypocrisy was entirely foreign to his nature.[9]

Gentz's lack of these particulars had, however, also its good aspects; it made of him a remarkable if not a great publicist, and it is a strange thing that he should naturally have been most suited to the very activity for which there was at least place in the political system of his maturity. For the masses he never wrote; he had in view the educated classes and for this reason did not shun thoroughness. His style is always clear and apt, and often picturesque and dramatic, as for instance in many of his letters and especially in his memoir to Archduke John. And yet, in spite of these qualities Gentz cannot be called the greatest German publicist of his time, for beyond question this place was held by Joseph Görres.

3. Gentz's Political Theories.

The most important sources of Gentz's political activity were undoubtedly his political theories, and, on that account they now require an especial treatment. This treatment, it is true, will be neither entertaining nor simple, for an uncommonly unfavorable situation has to be faced in this case. Although he was possessed of a clear and systematic mind, yet Gentz was not a professional teacher of law and thus never arrived at any really connected presentation of his political ideas; in 1792, 1794-1795 and 1799-1800 he makes, it is true, certain attempts in this direction. On the other hand, Gentz was by no means a mere pamphleteer; he always writes after a careful consideration and with no little knowledge of the subject,

[8]Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 599, note.

[9]Varnhagen von Ense, *Galerie von Bildnissen aus Rahels Umgang, und Briefwechsel*, II, 182.

trying above all to convince his readers by reasons. The presentation of the political thoughts of a man of his type must, therefore, necessarily be extensive as well as complicated.

We have no reason to assume that Gentz interested himself in questions of public law even while a student in the Gymnasium. Presumably, he came first in contact with them at Königsberg, where he probably attended Kant's course on the law of nature and certainly familiarized himself with the doctrines of the school of natural law. There he likewise became acquainted with Garve's edition of Cicero's *De Officiis*[10] and with Rousseau; however, it can not be ascertained whether the latter's political writings at that time entered into his vision. We are only slightly informed as to the years immediately following Gentz's stay at Königsberg; we know this that he read another work of Garve's, the treatise on the connection of morals and politics.[11] From 1790 on, we are somewhat better informed; Gentz now takes up once more the study of Montesquieu and devours everything that he can get hold of as regards pamphlets and newspapers dealing with the Revolution.[12]

The rationalistic doctrine of natural law, Cicero, Garve, Montesquieu and perhaps, also Rousseau then formed, so far as we know, the reading material from which the young Gentz drew his political ideas. In order to understand the latter it will, therefore, be neccessary first to study the former.

At the times when Gentz studied at Königsberg, the German law faculties were almost completely under the sway of the school of natural law; the positive law made itself felt only later. The natural law in its turn was essentially nothing but the application of the general rationalistic tendencies to the sphere of political life and thought; its standpoint coincided with that of ordinary

[10] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* I, 140 f.
[11] *Ibid.,* I, 146.
[12] *Ibid.,* I, 182, 179 f.

rationalism, that is, with the recognition of the primacy of reason. From this general basis the natural law proceeded, however, to the construction of a system of individual ideas, the most important of which were the following: the placing of the natural above the positive right; the emphasizing of the cultural aims and problems of the human race; the supposition of a state of nature; the derivation of organized society from a fictitious or historic social compact; the distinguishing between the subject of sovereignty and its administrator; the assertion of the right of removing incompetent or bad rulers; the identification of state duties with the protection of law and the advancement of the general welfare; the proclaiming of inalienable rights of man; the basing of international law on reason, treaties and usage; the drawing of a parallel between the relations of citizens and states; the supposition of a universal state comprising all nations; finally the condemning of war as a falling back into the state of nature or into barbarism, and a general tendency toward progress. The most important of these ideas was, perhaps, that of the world state, of a *societas* of the nations or of a *civitas maxima*. It is found with most of the advocates of natural law and is conceived by them in analogy with the notion of the individual state: its executive is resting with the total of the separate nations, its laws are, above all, the precepts of reason and its supreme court of justice is formed by the public opinion of the world. It would, however, be difficult to say how far this universal state was considered really to exist and to what extent it was a mere fiction; to men like Wolf it represented no reality, but others believed in it so seriously that they even demaned the abolition of the existing states.[13]

The political ideas of Cicero are found especially in his work *De Officiis*, that is, in that with which the young Gentz familiarized himself. Since it probably, as will be seen later on, exercised a particularly strong influence upon the latter, it may be best to quote the most characteristic

[13]Cf. p. 20 f.

passages of this work of Cicero's; they are the following.[14] "Whatever is virtuous arises from some one of these four divisions, for it consists either in sagacity and the perception of truth; or in the preservation of human society, by giving to every man his due, and by observing the faith of contracts; or in the greatness or firmness of an elevated and unsubdued mind; or in observing order and regularity in all our words and in all our actions, in which consists moderation and temperance" (I, 5). "We ought to regard, to cultivate, and to promote the good will and the social welfare of all mankind" (I,41). "The most extensive system is that by which the mutual society of mankind, and as it were, the intercourse of life is preserved. Of this there are two parts: justice, in which virtue displays itself with the most distinguished lustre and from which men are termed good; and allied to this, beneficence, which may likewise be termed benevolence or liberality" (I, 6). "That one virtue, justice, is the mistress and queen of all virtues" (III, 6). "There are two kinds of injustice; the first is of those who offer an injury, the second of those who have it in their power to avert an injury from those to whom it is offered, and yet do it not" (I,7). "The foundation of justice is faithfulness, which is perseverance and truth in all our declarations and in all our promises" (I, 7). "Nothing is more disgraceful than insincerity" (I, 42). "The main cause why most men are led to forgetfulness of justice is their falling into violent ambition after empire, honours, and glory" (I, 8). "There is a man for you who aspired to be king of the Romans and master of all nations, and accomplished it—if anyone says this desire is an honest one, he is a madman" (III, 21). "No vice is more foul . . . than avarice, especially in great men, and such administer the republic" (II, 22). "The knowledge and contemplation of nature is in a manner lame and unfinished, if it is followed by no activity; now activity is most perspicuous when it is exerted in protecting the

[14]From the translation by C. R. Edmonds, London, 1865.

rights of mankind" (I, 43). "It is, therefore, more serviceable to the public for a man to discourse copiously, provided it is to the purpose, than for a man to think ever so accurately without the power of expression" (I, 44). "Those acts which are done in a timid, humble, abject and broken spirit . . . are inexpedient because they are scandalous, foul and base" (III, 32). "The administration of a government, like a guardianship, ought to be directed to the good of those who confer, and not of those who receive the trust" (I, 25). "Nor indeed is this forbidden by nature alone—that is by the law of nations—but is also in the same manner enacted by the municipal laws of countries . . . that it should not be lawful to injure another man for the sake of one's own advantage" (III, 5). "This is the peculiar concern of a state and city, that every person's custody of his own property be free and undisturbed" (II, 22). "The desertion of the common interest is contrary to nature" (II, 6). "The interest of each individually and of all collectively should be the same" (III, 6). "Equality of rights has ever been the object of desire; nor otherwise can there be any rights at all" (II, 12). "Equality . . . is entirely subverted, if each be not permitted to possess his own" (II, 22). "As to actions resulting from the customs of civil institutions of a people, no precepts can be laid down; for those very institutions are precepts in themselves" (I, 4). "Wars . . . are to be undertaken for this end that we may live in peace without being injured" (I, 11). "Our magistrates and generals sought to derive their highest glory from this single fact that they had upon the principles of equity and honor defended their provinces and allies" (II, 8).

If we compare these ideas with the corresponding ones of the natural law, their similarity will become immediately apparent: here as well as there, we find the belief in the cultural ideals of the human race and in the existence of a bond embracing all nations, the differentiation between state and ruler, the emphasizing of the promotion of the general welfare, the drawing of a parallel between

state and international duties and the rejection of offensive wars. It is true, there exists no complete harmony between the two doctrines—Cicero demands equality, he respects established institutions and customs, he knows of no natural rights in the special sense of the word and favors, of course, a republican form of government, while the doctrine of natural law takes an almost opposite stand on all these points—yet, these differences are in themselves of no great importance and remained almost unknown to the eighteenth century. In fact, so little was the period conscious of them that many rationalists would claim the Roman orator and statesman as one of their own; suffice it to mention here the names of Hume, Voltaire, Mirabeau, Robespierre, and Garve.

The translator and editor of Cicero, Garve, must to a certain degree, be considered a rationalist; he could, however, be called an eclectic philosopher almost as well. He rejects dogmatism and declares that not the theory alone, but the theory coupled with a careful consideration of actual conditions should determine the form of government and the framing of laws. Whether politics may successfully be connected with morals, he does not dare to decide being of the opinion that a satisfactory answer to that could not be given. The smaller states, he thinks, must yield to the vital interests of the larger ones; at the same time, however, he asserts that the rulers should consider it their duty to advance the welfare of all humanity. The most important duty of the government is, according to him, the protection of the law; he is not averse to moderate progress and a certain degree of liberty, but objects to a complete abrogation of the privileges of the nobility. He looks with admiration upon England and in the beginning sympathetically greets the Revolution.

The fundamental principle of Rousseau was the idea of the sovereignty of the people, which he holds, however, in a quite unique way: he demands that this sovereignty be exercised directly and without the division of the powers. Montesquieu, on the other hand, advocated the latter

and saw in the British constitution the model for every other constitution.

We have little direct information as to what political theories the young Gentz held. From a letter to Garve of October, 1784,[15] we may infer that he had, at that time, become acquainted with the translation of the *Officiis;* "an excellent book", he writes, "which exercised a very important influence upon my moral principles, my way of thinking and my character". Whether this influence emanated from Cicero himself or rather from the notes and treatises of Garve's edition cannot be said definitely; it is, however, probable that it proceeded from the former, for some years later Gentz begins to raise objections to Garve and to raise them from a rationalistic and Ciceronian standpoint. At the beginning of October, 1789, he writes to Garve that the principles of morals and of philosophy are most valuable when practically applied, an idea that the year before had been declared by the latter to be open to criticism.[16] At the end of October, 1789, Gentz makes further attacks on Garve and they contain the first direct utterances which we have from him on questions of public law.[17] It is, he asserts, a matter of doubt whether there was ever a state of nature, for the existence natural to mankind is one regulated by contracts. Through contracts rights are created, and where there are rights there are also duties. The latter may be divided into two kinds, those of compulsion and those of moral obligation; both of these are the precepts of reason, but only the fulfillment of the former can be enforced. The capacity for fulfilling the duties of compulsion is justice, that for fulfilling the duties of moral obligation beneficence or benevolence. Gentz does not recognize any rights based solely on superior power, for this would be antagonistic to reason and reason is to him the highest judge. Likewise he will not allow the ruler to treat the state as his property; the ruler, he declares, is

[15] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 140 f.
[16] *Ibid.*, I, 144.
[17] *Ibid.*, I, 148 ff.

only "the first servant" of the state and subject to the verdict of the people. The states themselves, however, he believes to be moral personages; they stand toward one another in relations identical to those between private citizens and are, therefore, bound by mutual obligations. Further remarks date back to the year 1790. In one of them Gentz speaks with considerable emphasis of the rights of the people without, however, pointing out which particular rights he is thinking of.[18] Others are found in the treatise *Über den Ursprung der obersten Prinzipien des Rechts*.[19] Reason and liberty, so Gentz now assumes, form the true nature of mankind; reason, again, is the faculty of having ideas and represents the highest and original source of rights. The ideas of reason pertaining to law are inalienable and, therefore, called the "original rights of mankind"; of such ideas there are three: the common individual right over one's self, the right of property, and the right of maintaining contracts.

In short, Gentz's political system would then, according to this, until 1790 be the following: the chief elements of the human nature are reason and liberty; reason is primarily the faculty of ideas and as such the source of positive law; the precepts of reason are compulsory to all, even when dealing with foreign nations, and the most important of them are those of justice and benevolence; finally, the ruler is nothing but the mandatory of the popular will and accountable to its forum.

The years 1791 and 1792 were of special importance for Gentz's inner development. Unfortunately the course of this development is rather unknown, for Gentz's correspondence with Garve—the best source of information about his earlier political theories—is missing beyond April, 1791; we know, however, that during this period Gentz did considerable reading, likewise that he watched the events in France with great interest and was gradually losing his sympathies with the cause of the Revolu-

[18] *Ibid.*, I, 158.

[19] *Forschungen zur brand. und preuss. Geschichte*, XIX, 18 f.

tion.[20] In the beginning of 1793 Gentz appeared with the first of his many anti-revolutionary writings, the translations of Burke's *Reflections*, to which he added notes, and five political treatises from his own pen.[21]

Burke has certain points in common with rationalism; fundamentally, however, he is little of a rationalist. He practically knows no social compact and explains the origin of the state from the desire to get protection for existing contracts and agreements. The first obligation of the state he sees in this protection of rights, the second in "benevolence" or in the advancement of the general welfare. There is, according to him, no inborn right of equality; he would rather consider the state in the light of an association in which every member partakes of the profits in proportion to his investment. He considers freedom, in general, as a matter of small importance; the absolute freedom of the state of nature is inconceivable to him in organized society, but at the same time he advocates as little restriction of liberty as possible. Any right of participating in government he denies, reserving the conduct of public affairs to wealth, noble birth and talent; likewise he repudiates the tendency towards constructing constitutions at will; for these, in his opinion, must grow and cannot be fabricated. He strongly attacks the principle that everybody is naturally qualified to govern, maintaining that government is an art or, at best a trade which must be learnt like every other. Were we to ask him in what his ideal of a well-governed state consisted, he would answer: in the conception of a state in which order, prosperity, propriety, the protection of law and property, confidence in the government, and respect for the established order of things form the fundamentals of the community.

Gentz began to read Burke in April, 1791. At first he liked only the latter's style,[22] but in the introduction to his translation of Burke's work on the French Revolution he

[20] Cf. p. 57 f.

[21] Weick, I-II.

[22] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 203 f.

declares himself to be in harmony also with the principles of the author.[23] His political theories at about the beginning of 1793 are then, according to him, those of Burke, After 1792, these theories develop but little; they may undergo slight changes, as for instance in 1814 and again in 1819, but on the whole, they are stationary. They form a unit; they must, therefore, be treated as such, and the following pages will try to present them in this form.

The first problem which confronts us here is the very difficult question whether Gentz must be classed with the rationalistic or with the positive-historic school of law. He has been claimed by both sides, and in reality he belongs to both schools: in his fight against the Revolution he proceeds more from positive-historical points of view, while he bases his opposition to Napoleon chiefly on a rationalistic line of reasoning.

Those who see in him more the adherent of the law of nature refer, of course, to such passages in his works as those in which the primacy of reason is explained. There are, it is true, many utterances of this kind in Gentz; however, if we analyse them closely, they do not always actually contain what, at the first glance, they seem to mean. Besides, there could be mentioned an equally large number of passages expressing a positivistic point of view. If we wish to arrive at a clear understanding of Gentz's attitude in this regard, we have, therefore, to proceed with the greatest caution and accuracy.

In the treatises of the year 1793, Gentz speaks of the "deduction of the pure notions of law", of the "precepts of the law of nature", of "original rights", of the "specific rights of mankind" and of "original natural rights";[24] likewise, well-known teachers of the law of nature, such as Grotius and Pufendorf, are mentioned and referred to as authorities.[25] Furthermore, we hear in 1795 that the

[23] Weick, I, 20 f.
[24] *Ibid.*, II, 76 f., 39, 87, 89 ff.
[25] *Ibid.*, II, 77.

idea of the community of mankind is "a fiction of reason striving for perfection" and the notion of the human perfectibility, "an idea founded on reason as firmly as the idea of a supreme being, or of an unending existence of the substances".[26] In 1800 we find the remark that eternal peace is demanded by reason, and that order and lawfulness are the symptoms of reason.[27] In 1793 Gentz declares that the advocates of the old order of things have to turn to reason; similiarly he explains in 1800 and again in 1809, that it is advisable to order constitutions grown up historically according to the demands of logic and reason.[28] Even in 1817, he writes to Adam Müller: "Concerning all which can be recognized by reason there must be an appeal to reason, that is, to individual reasoning. . . . Explain it as you like, my first impulse will always be that of an appeal to my reason."[29]

In all these passages, Gentz clearly takes the stand of a rationalist. He is, however, not less emphatic in upholding the cause of the positive-historic law. In 1799 he calls the question regarding the lawfulness of an action the first and most important of all;[30] lawful, on the other hand, he declares in 1800 to be equivalent to whatever the sovereign commands.[31] At the same time he demands that no laws should be created which are likely to infringe upon existing rights;[32] likewise, he sees the main purpose of the social compact in the protection of the agreements and contracts entered into during the state of nature and in organized society.[33] He recognizes, in a general way, natural rights until about 1800, and as such he considers the right of liberty, property, self-defense, and of adherence

[26] *Ibid.*, V, 211.
[27] H. J., 1800, III, 713, 718, 771.
[28] *Ibid.*, I, 112 f. *Aus dem Nachlasse*, I, 298.
[29] *Briefw. zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, 238 f.
[30] *H. J.*, 1799, II, 309 ff.
[31] *Ibid.*, 1800, I, 18.
[32] *Ibid.*, I, 7, 30, 1799; II, 142.
[33] Cf. p. 43.

to contracts, while he rejects a natural right of equality and of personal safety;[34] yet he maintains as early as 1793 that states cannot be constructed on the basis of human rights and that these general rights are not inalienable. Very emphatically he asserts in the treatise *Über die Deklaration der Rechte*: "That the human being in entering into company with equals gives up part of its original rights only in order to enjoy the remainder in safety and to have the total of its manifold aims advanced,—upon that everybody agrees".[35] At all events, the natural and the civil rights are for him fundamentally different,[36] and in 1800 he declares, therefore, that there are no rights of man any more as soon as there are state rights;[37] in 1809 he even goes a step farther calling all talk about inborn rights mere nonsense.[38]

The chaos, then, seems to be complete. If we wish to clear it, we will have, first of all, to remember the particular notion of reason existing and prevailing at the time when Gentz entered the years of his maturity. At present, reason, in general, simply means the understanding or the faculty of logical thinking. The rationalism of the eighteenth century, however, understood by reason not only the latter, but also, and preeminently so, an assumed faculty of having ideas. Until Kant, the linguistic usage did hardly distinguish between the words "reason" and "understanding", using both of them interchangeably. In a certain sense, this practice was continued even later on; in general, however, Kant succeeded in introducing his differentiation between the two terms, and after him "reason" meant then more or less the faculty of ideas. Gentz uses the word "reason" in the old sense as well as in the new, and in this lies one of the chief causes of the seeming

[34] Weick, II, 89 f., 86. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 6 f.
[35] Weick, II, 63.
[36] *Ibid.*, II, 89 ff. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 75 f.
[37] *H. J.*, 1800, I, 61.
[38] *Aus dem Nachlasse*, I, 294.

confusion referred to above. For instance, when he declares that the man of conservative tendencies has, in defending his standpoint, to turn to reason, when he recommends the rational construction of constitutions or tells Adam Müller that an appeal to reason will always be his last and decisive act, he has undoubtedly in mind nothing but the understanding. A further cause of this confusion is Gentz's attitude in passages speaking of reason as of the faculty of forming ideas; in those he unquestionably appears, to a certain degree, as a rationalist. Yet, his rationalism is never without a tinge and is coupled with other tendencies. The ideas or commandments of reason are for Gentz, as we shall see later on,[39] since 1793 in general mere ideals ranking as such after the positive law; at times, however, they represent to him also strictly binding orders and then they are in rank co-ordinate with any positive law. Within the sphere of state law he places the positive-historic law invariably first, and there the precepts of reason have for him no other meaning than that of ideals. In the sphere of international law he generally considers the ideas of reason in the same light; now and then, however he places, in this case, the rational law at the side or even before the law established by treaties or by usage. His ultimate aim seems to be the transforming of all rational into positive law.

Among the precepts—or ideals—of reason that of the progress toward the perfection of the human race was for Gentz during a number of years the most important. It is found especially in his treatises of 1793-1795; after 1800 we hear little more of it.[40] The individuals, the state and the totality of the states, so Gentz demonstrates often and with particular emphasis, combine to advance this ideal: the individuals by devoting themselves to their calling, the state by protecting the law and promoting productive labor, and the totality of the states by cultivating the bonds of

[39]Cf. p. 49.

[40]Weick, II, 22 f.

intercourse and mutual good will existing between them.[41] Yet, in spite of his enthusiasm for human progress Gentz was never blind to the disadvantages and dangers usually connected with such growth,[42] and this feeling grew upon him more and more, until it finally almost broke up his enthusiasm for the cause of human culture. As early as 1805, he calls himself an opponent rather than a friend of progress; and this he continued to be until his death, although he always demanded the cultivation of the spirit of fellowship and mutual consideration.[43]

Gentz even in 1789 doubts whether there ever was a state of nature; he repeats his doubt in 1793.[44] He seems to believe, however, in the existence of a social compact, at least up to 1800,[45] and we may say that his conception of this compact lies about half-way between the strictly rationalistic and the historic point of view. The maintenance of the unlimited freedom of the state of nature, Gentz asserts, or the introduction of equality cannot have been the aim of the social compact;[46] the right of self-defense was even abolished by it.[47] But what did this compact then really aim at? It meant, answers Gentz, the renouncing of a part of the natural rights in order to enjoy the rest more fully and satisfactorily,[48] the protection of the individual, positive rights acquired by contracts before or during the alleged social compact,[49] the advancement of the manifold problems of humanity,[50] the establishing of a supreme legislature and executive authority,[51] and the

[41] *Ibid.*, V, 193, note; II, 24. *H. J.*, 1799, III, 447, 477.
[42] Weick, V, 190 ff. *H. J.*, 1800, III, 730 f., 747.
[43] Schlesier, IV, 176 f.
[44] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 148 f. Weick, II, 64.
[45] *H. J.*, 1800, I, 4; III, 768, 772 f.
[46] Cf. p. 46 f.
[47] Weick, II, 90 f.
[48] *Ibid.*, II, 63.
[49] *Ibid.*, II, 88. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 5.
[50] Weick, II, 9, 63.
[51] *H. J.*, 1799, III, 280 ff., 302.

creation of a constitution and, by that, of a nation.[52] Gentz does not acknowledge any right of the individual to declare the social agreement null and void; he reserves it to the totality of the contracting parties acting as a united political body.[53] The mandate given to the supreme authority forms, according to him, a part of the social compact itself and lasts, on account of that, as long as the latter;[54] consequently, it cannot be recalled or abolished separately.

A wholly different theoretical basis for the authority of the state is given by Gentz in 1809, and it is probable that this new theory from then on and even earlier formed a part of his political system in general. It is formulated by him as follows: "To consider the monarch as the proprietor of the state (in the sense in which some private citizen may be called the owner of his estate) is an indefensible and undignified idea. It is true, the state is intrusted to the monarch; but only in the interest of the people shall he administer it; and the transference takes place not by virtue of a common, miserable contract, which can be terminated at will by any of the parties; to treat the state like a leasehold estate . . . is a blunder of such inexcusable magnitude that compared with it the idea of some of the older politicians assuming a divine right, a power handed over to the monarch, as it were, by God himself appears not only to be endurable but even attractive. The state is neither the property of someone, nor an object of the whims of the people; it is an everlasting community to bind together by indestructible ties the present, the past and the future; and in this sense it is of God".[55]

The duty of the state is for Gentz, in general, identical with the purpose of the social compact: it consists, in the maintenance of order and peace, in the assurance of a certain amount of liberty, in the protection of law and in

[52] *Ibid.*, III, 282; I, 488 f.
[53] Weick, II, 46, *H. J.*, 1799, III, 288 f.
[54] *H. J.* 1799, III, 282 f.
[55] *Aus dem Nachlasse*, I, 288.

the advancement of the general welfare.[56] The introduction of equality is excluded from it.[57] Of these duties the most important are the two last named, or, as Gentz says, the duties of "natural justice" and of "moral perfection".[58] They, again, rank according to their worth in such manner that the protection of law stands in the first place, the promotion of the general welfare, however, in the second place, and in establishing this scale Gentz deviates from rationalism more than anywhere else. "Law", he says, "is the fundamental basis of social existence and the supreme rule of the state. The public weal is a great ideal, but compared with law, it is subordinate".[59] The rights which he desires to be preserved by government are—and it is important to keep this in view—less the general, natural rights retained in organized society, than the individual rights based on special contracts;[60] of these, again, the right of property is the most important.[61] Gentz assumes that their fulfillment is of general interest and asserts more than once that the common welfare and the welfare of the individual are identical.[62] Of course, he does not fail to admit that a state governed according to these principles may appear harsh; but that cannot be changed. On the other hand, he finds that the strict enforcement of the laws makes their observance considerably easier; "to do what is right", he declares, "may, under such circumstances, often become hard and injurious, . . . but to know what duty requires will, at least, be no riddle."[63]

As to the form of government, Gentz shows a good deal of indifference towards all formulas, believing that none of them will give full guarantee of just laws and of a

[56]Weick, I, 55 ff., 90; V, 3 f. *H. J.*, 1799, III, 301 f., 312; 1800, I, 29 ff., 116 f.

[57]Weick, II, 86 f. *H. J.* 1800, I, 5 ff.

[58]Weick, II, 46.

[59]*H. J.*, 1800, I, 30.

[60]Weick, II, 63 f., 88, 98. *H. J.*, 1799, III, 301 ff., 310 ff.; 1800, I, 4 ff., 30 ff.

[61]Weick, II, 199, 90.

[62]*Ibid.*, V, 3, 193.

[63]*Ibid.*, II, 56.

rigorous enforcement of existing regulations.[64] He lays, therefore, more stress on sagacity and experience[65] and is insistent only on that nothing but the law shall be authoritative in the state.[66] In reality, it is true, Gentz is less indifferent towards the form of government than he often pretends to be. At the time of the beginning of the French Revolution and at any rate until 1794, he considers the then existing British constitution as the best imaginable and would like to see other constitutions being shaped after it.[67] In 1799 we find him in irresolute oscillations: incidentally he still points to the British constitution as a model;[68] but at the same time he remarks that the purely monarchical form of government is as good as any other.[69] After 1800 he comes out more and more openly for the system of enlightened absolutism; from then on he is, at any rate, the untiring foe of democracy.

If the ideas of liberty, equality and sovereignty of the people may be called the fundamental principles of democracy, what was, then, Gentz's attitude towards them?

Liberty as such is to him no political ideal in the proper sense of the word.[70] In the state of nature, he declares, everybody was free, even absolutely free; in organized society, however, only restricted liberty is possible. There, the one form of liberty which is indispensable is the absence of arbitrariness or despotism and the rule of the law. A greater amount of liberty, Gentz thinks, would be injurious to the true interests of the state; for no government, so he asserts repeatedly and emphatically, can be efficient and beneficial, except it be strong and centralized.[71]

[64] *Ibid.*, I, 112. Translation of Mallet du Pan, conclusion. *H. J.* 1799, I. 490 ff., III, 283, 286.

[65] Weick, I, 112, note; II, 9, 40, 88. *H. J.*, 1799, III, 286 f.

[66] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 489; III, 284.

[67] Translation of Mallet du Pan, 22, note, 33, note.

[68] *H. J.*, 1799, III, 448, note.

[69] *Ibid.*, I, 498.

[70] Weick, II, 86 ff., 120; V, 197, note. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 77 ff.

[71] Weick II, 12. *H. J.*, 1799, I, 298ff.; II, 55, 457; 1800, I. 121 ff., 165 f., 336; II, 457. Weick, II, 56. *H. J.*, 1800 I, 196, 341 I.

Equality[72] is rejected by Gentz in the most absolute way, if equality of rights is meant; it is, on the other hand, accepted, if it means equal protection of acquired rights. The first he calls the "objective", and the second the "subjective" equality.

The principle of the sovereignty of the people is of all democratic doctrines the most hateful to Gentz, because it is the most important and far-reaching. He denies any right of participation in the conduct of public affairs, any alleged natural ability to govern, any possibility of finding out what the popular will demands and consists of, any right of the citizens to criticize the laws of the state from the basis of general principles, in short, everything that has been said about and in favor of this hated doctrine.[73] To him government is an art requiring talent and training as much as any other art,[74] and, on account of that, he would reserve the right of cultivating this art to the sovereign of the state, to his officials, to noble rank, to wealth, in a certain sense also to talent.[75] Summing up his objections he remarks in 1809: "The sovereignty of the people is the wildest, most wicked, most dangerous of all chimeras".[76]

Gentz does not, as might be expected, assume that there is anything like complete justice to be found administered even in the best of the existing states;[77] but he denies, nevertheless, any right of withdrawing from the social contract, so long as not all the participants are ready to do so. A right of revolution is neither rejected nor acknowledged by him;[78] as a matter of fact, however, he dislikes revolutions most heartily. He abhors the idea of

[72]Weick, II, 85 ff., 107 ff.; V, 199. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 5 ff., 83.

[73]*H. J.*, 1799, III, 292 ff. Weick, I, 112 note. Translation of Mallet du Pan, 20 f., note, 101, note, 89 note. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 76.

[74]Weick, II, 9, 12 f.; V, 4, 193, note.

[75]*Ibid.*, I, 99, note, 23 ff., 44 ff.; II, 136 ff., 13 ff.; IV, 75 ff. *H. J.*, 1800, I, 26. *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 87.

[76]*Aus dem Nachlasse*, I, 288.

[77]*H. J.*, 1800, III, 777.

[78]Weick, II, 35 ff.

removing a ruler and bases his attitude in this regard on the theory that the ruler's mandate lasts as long as the social contract itself, that is, as he expects, forever. He preaches obedience and confidence to those who are governed, and a paternal consideration of the common weal to those who govern; or, to use his own words, he demands "on the part of the people respect and confidence, on the part of the authorities generosity and firmness, strength and benevolence, frankness and paternal care".[79] Progress there must be, of course; but this progress should be slow and never too incisive. In 1799 he still adheres to the programme of "conserving by improving";[80] by the end of 1805 he declares, however, that although wishing for a balance between the forces of conservation and progress he was, at the present time, working exclusively in the interests of the first.[81]

Gentz uses not unfrequently—as he does especially in 1804 and 1805—expressions like "eternal laws", "eternal principles", "divine and human rights", "most sacred principles", or the like, and exhorts the princes as well as the people to stand up for the defense of such rights and principles.[82] What he understands by them will become evident when we consider that he apparently uses the words "foundations of the social order" and "principles of public order and morality" as synoyms of the expressions named above; according to this, he would, then, use the latter in order to designate the ideas of his political system in general.

If we turn to Gentz's views on international law and international politics, we hit, first of all, upon the idea of a world state. We know that Gentz favors close commercial and cultural relations between the civilized nations;[83] but he speaks also of a "general state", a "confederation of states", a "*grande association que tous les peuples civilisés*

[79] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 104.
[80] *Ibid.*, II, 143.
[81] Schlesier, IV, 176 f.
[82] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 14 f., 31, 38, 81, 86.
[83] Cf. p. 42 f.

forment entre eux" or a "*communio eminentissima*" of the nations,[84] and the question arises, therefore, what he really means by using such terms. In other words: was the world state for Gentz a fact, a legal fiction, or a mere ideal of reason? The answer to this question is by no means easy. In general Gentz alternates these three conceptions; in particular, however, he probably favours most the idea of the universal state as a mere goal to be attained by the gradual extension of international law based upon treaties. How much he alternated in this regard may be seen from the fact that he considers the establishment of a federation of the states—first of all of those of Europe—to be a mere ideal in 1799 and in 1800, that he treats it as an actual fact in 1805, rejects it entirely in 1809, and seems to take it to be a fact once more in 1813.

As regards the individual rights and duties of the states in dealing with one another Gentz mentions, above all, the right of independence, of safety, and of honour, together with the duty of international justice.[85] The latter consists for him, however, not only in doing no wrong, but also—and this is important—in helping others to get what is due to them;[86] most emphatically he declares it to be the duty of each and every state to render assistance to those who are forced to defend their rights.

Gentz knows of three means through which he expects the maintenance of an international state of conditions in which the law is reigning supreme; they are: international congresses, the preservation of the balance of power among the European nations, and, as the *ultima ratio*, war.

In itself Gentz would have liked nothing more than to see every European complication settled peacefully and by means of congresses; but for that the time was too

[84]Weick, II, 192, 195; IV, 69; V, 6, 8, 195. *H. J.*, 1799, I, 405. *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 86. Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 251.

[85]Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 278, 282, 284. Weick, IV, 66 ff., note; V, 8. *Aus dem Nachlasse*, I, 301.

[86]Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 287. *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 86.

stormy, and thus he refers, before 1815, to this mode of settlement extremely seldom.[87]

The maintenance of the balance of power was for him an idea to which he clung all his life because he believed that he had found in it a panacea for all international complications;[88] he defines it as the grouping of the smaller powers in such way as to neutralize the forces of a paramount state and sees in it the real aim of the art of diplomacy. Should it prove to be impossible to create or to utilize properly this balance of power toward the protection of international rights, then—but only then—diplomacy must give way to force. The *ultima ratio* of all relations between the different states is, therefore, for Gentz too: war;[89] he considers it as being justifiable not only if waged for the defence of a country, but also if undertaken in order to suppress dangerous movements outside one's own state, and proclaims a formal law of intervention.[90]

So much for the political theories of Gentz. There remains, however, one question to be answered, which, until now, has received almost no attention. If the political theories of Gentz, as has been said above, formed the basis of his fight against the Revolution and Napoleon, then they naturally must have been older than this fight; the problem which confronts us now would, therefore, be this: were Gentz's theories really older than his struggle, or did they not rather originate during the conflict?

It must be admitted that this question allows of no solution which would be entirely proof against objections. Approximate solutions of it are, however, quite possible, and they will, ultimately, have to rest on our knowledge of Gentz's relations to Cicero.

A priority of the political theories held by Gentz to his struggle against the Revolution can not be shown from

[87] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 63.

[88] Weick, II, 195. *H. J.*, 1800, III, 757 ff.

[89] Weick, I, 68; II, 152 ff.; V, 7. *H. J.*, 1800, III, 775 f., 782 ff.

[90] Weick, II, 194 ff. Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 251 ff.

any of his earliest utterances, for there is not a sufficient number of them. Neither has the fact that Gentz knew and admired Montesquieu, Rousseau, Garve and Burke any bearing on the question; to admire a political system does not necessarily mean to accept it, and even by granting this, we would only admit that Gentz, at that time, had accepted the political ideas of these men and could not have had, just for this reason, his own ideas of 1793 and the following years which were rather different. The same may be said concerning his study of natural law at Königsberg and at Berlin.

The attempt to establish this priority would, then, have to be abandoned, had we not at our disposal one bit of evidence which appears to be more or less convincing: Gentz's knowledge and admiration of Cicero of which he himself informs us. We know that he had read the latter's work *De officiis* even before 1789 and that he speaks of the great influence which it had had upon his mind and his character;[91] in 1790, he even incidentally mentions that the book—probably in the Garve edition—forms part of his meager library.[92] Furthermore, in 1793 and in 1794, he refers to or quotes the Roman as an authority.[93] We have, therefore, sufficient indications to permit the hypothesis that Gentz, before 1789, had been essentially influenced and guided by Cicero, and only incidentally by other political thinkers. But it is just these ideas of Cicero's, as the above citations show,[94] which are fundamentally identical with those held by Gentz before and after the year 1789. Comparing the two we may, then, conclude that the political system of the latter did antedate his political struggle, in so far as this is possible in complicated historical questions.

And on this hypothesis Gentz's attitude after 1790 will cease to be a riddle which it must otherwise always

[91] Cf. p. 36.

[92] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 164.

[93] Weick, I, 258 f., note. Translation of Mallet du Pan, 21, note.

[94] Cf. p. 33 f.

be in our eyes. As will be seen later, Gentz was, in the beginning, a friend of the Revolution who was enthusiastic about the sacred principles of liberty and equality. Such enthusiasm he could not have developed on the basis of the teachings of natural law, for this stood for the omnipotence of the government and the preservation of the aristocracy; but such a course would be thoroughly permissible from the Ciceronian viewpoint. If Gentz later turned against equality, it would not necessarily indicate a departure from this standpoint; he may, on more careful consideration, have noticed that Cicero refers, after all, less to equality of rights than to equal protection of rights whatever these might be. In addition to this, Cicero was, of course, the sworn enemy of all excesses such as the Revolution brought with it. It is true that he does not frequently speak of forms of government, whereas Gentz, between 1789 and 1795, considered constitutional government the best; but it is just the relative silence on these points which made it possible for Gentz to yield to other influences without being disloyal to his fundamental principles as well as to the inspirer of the same.

It can, of course, not be denied that the Ciceronian influence on Gentz often coincided with that of natural law; likewise it must be admitted that Gentz's original ideas were, to a certain extent, modified by his reading of Burke and Mallet du Pan, and by the course of the French Revolution itself.

II. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE REVOLUTION

1. Before the Struggle: 1789-1792.

On the right bank of the Rhine there existed already in the years 1787 and 1788 here and there a fear that Europe was on the eve of disturbances; but when the Revolution really broke out in France, even those who had felt such premonitions were surprised. The sensation which the rapid succession of events since 1789 aroused was extraordinary and persisted often for a considerable time after the opening scenes of the great drama.[1] Even in 1793, Archenholz writes in his *Minerva*: "The French Revolution crowds out everything else by reason of its intense interest; the best poetry remains unread."[2] In 1794, Gentz remarks likewise: "The French Revolution is one of those occurences which belong to all mankind; it is an occurence of such magnitude that it is scarcely permissible in its presence to be occupied with any lesser interest."[3]

[1]For a better understanding of the following, it is well at this point to recall the chief events of the French Revolution. They are as follows: May 5th, 1789, assembling of the *États-Generaux* at Versailles; June 17th, establishment of the third estate as the National Assembly; July 14th, storming of the Bastille; August 27th, declaration of the rights of man; October 5th to 6th, procession of the mob to Versailles, removal of the royal family and of the National Assembly to Paris; June 20th, 1791, flight of the king to Varennes and his return to Paris; October, 1791 to September, 1792, Legislative Assembly; April 20th, 1792, declaration of war against Austria, and February 1st, 1792, against Holland, England and Spain; May, 1792, actual beginning of the revolutionary wars; August 10th, storming of the Tuileries; August 13th, suspension and imprisonment of the king, Jacobins in power; September 2nd to 7th, massacre of royalists and constitutionalistic prisoners at Paris and in other large cities; September, 1792, to October, 1795, National Convention; September 21st, 1792, abolition of the monarchy; January 21st, 1792, execution of the king; March, 1793, to July, 1794, Reign of Terror; October, 1795, to November, 1799, government of the Directory; October 9th (18th Brumaire), 1799, *Coup d'État* by Napoleon Bonaparte.

[2]August Number, 199.

[3]Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xvi.

The enthusiasm for the Revolution in Germany was at first wide-spread; it was, however, not equally intense everywhere, and even where it did prevail, it was subject to considerable variations.[4] The West and the South seem to have been most affected, that is to say, the territory which lay nearest to France and which is even today, the stronghold of German democracy. By the end of 1789 and the spring of 1790 in this part of Germany—especially in the Palatinate, in Hesse and in the ecclesiastical territories on the left bank of the Rhine, in the Black Forest and in many of the imperial cities—even numerous petty revolts broke out, which were, however, subdued without much effort, either by compromise or by force. Toward the spring of 1791, the first enthusiasm had subsided, and then unheard of events followed one another with dreadful rapidity. The result of this was that the number of those sympathizing with the Revolution quickly decreased during 1792-1795. Already the 20th of June, 1791, had caused many to waver; but the 13th of August, the 2nd to 7th and the 21st of September, 1792, the 21st of January, 1793, and finally the whole Reign of Terror made an extremely unfavorable impression. After the fall of Robespierre, the sympathy for the Revolution once more increased and was further strengthened by the victories of Bonaparte in Italy.

The intellectual classes of Germany seem to have been more persistently committed to the couse of the Revolution than any other class; they saw in it a movement which was essential to the progress of humanity and were inclined to ignore its excesses or to excuse them on the ground of circumstances. Gentz complains of this as late as 1794, in the midst of the Reign of Terror.[5] The nobility was, in the main, opposed to the Revolution, which as regards the country districts of Prussia, had great significance. The clergy and the government became, of course, very soon decidedly hostile to all revolutionary tendencies.

[4]Cf. for the following: Wenck, *Deutschland vor hundert Jahren.*

[5]Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., v.

The attitude of the peasants varied considerably. In the North they remained in general quiet, owing to their natural conservatism, to the influence of the local powers, the landed nobility and the clergy, to their old Prussian instinct for discipline and their geographical remoteness from France. In the West and South, however, there was at first considerable restlessness, as has been previously remarked, especially on account of statute labor and the damage done by game. The peasantry of Swabia remained devoted to the cause of the Revolution down to 1796, and not until the French themselves appeared in the country, did this feeling change.[6] The invasion of the French armies into German territories cooled the enthusiasm for the Revolution also in other districts; the plundering of the imperial city of Frankfort a. M. by Custine made, for example, a deep impression on almost all Germany, particularly of course, on its rich commercial centers. As an illustration of the opinions then prevailing in Germany, we may cite two contemporary judgments, one from the South and one from the North. In 1798 the Swabian Z. L. Huber writes, that there existed in his country, as elsewhere in Germany, three parties: those who were hostile to the Revolution, those who sympathized with it, and finally a middle party. The enemies, he explained, would like to see the Revolution with all its principles and effects nowhere else than in limbo, and in this party he includes first of all the rulers, the governments, and the nobles; the sympathizers, on the other hand, delighted in the Revolution and many of its methods, while the middle party agreed with the principles of the Revolution, but regretted its ways.[7] According to the Hanoverian E. Brandes, there prevailed among the nobles and among many of the officials not only disgust with, but even a considerable fear of, the Revolution; on the other hand, the movement met with sympathy from a minority of the officials and from

[6] Lang, *Von und aus Schwaben,* III, 88.
[7] *Ibid.,* III, 67.

most of the political theorists.[8] As to the particular conditions of Prussia, a modern historian assumes that there the nobility and army were more or less against the Revolution and the middle classes more or less for it, while some of the high officials and not a few of the lower ones felt at least convinced that reforms were necessary.[9]

The centres of this struggle between the conflicting views for and against the Revolution were Hamburg, Berlin and Göttingen in the North, Tübingen in the South, and Jena in middle Germany. At Göttingen, Brandes, Schlözer, and Girtanner had been writing against the Revolution since 1791, while at Tübingen the tireless Posselt was working for it since about 1795. In 1793, there arose a new opponent to the Revolution: the young Frederick Gentz.

If we wish to understand Gentz's position towards the Revolution from the beginning, we must attempt to put ourselves into his state of mind. He was, as has been shown above, strongly interested in the progress of human culture, in justice, freedom, and equality—in the last, it is true, in a rather vague sense—and believed, at any rate later on, that the conditions of pre-revolutionary France were really bad and needed reforming.[10] He heard the mutterings of the French people, but also saw, or thought he saw, that the king and the government were not only ready for such reforms but had even taken steps toward their realization.[11] Of the character of the French nation itself he had, furthermore, a rather high opinion to which he gives expression even in the midst of the struggle. What else, then, could he expect, but that the work of reform would now be completed? It might be completed even though with disturbances, yet without the shedding of blood or the overthrow of law; and it is not improbable that Gentz expected it to be accomplished along the lines recom-

[8] Wenck, *Deutschland vor hundert Jahren*, II, 4.

[9] Wittichen, *Forschungen zur brand. und preuss. Geschichte*, XIX, 6 ff.

[10] Cf. p. 67.

[11] Cf. p. 67 f.

mended by Cicero in the passage which he cited in 1793.[12] That he really did entertain these hopes can, of course, not be proved absolutely.[13] It is true, had Gentz possessed more experience, he could have seen even then that it is wholly impossible to forecast the future in any way so long as events depend upon the multitude and upon its psychology.

In view of this we must, therefore, find it but natural that Gentz at first should have welcomed the Revolution. As Henrietta Herz relates,[14] he was enthusiastic about the cause of freedom even in 1787, and we can follow the course of his sympathy in his letters to Garve down to April 19, 1791.[15] He states that he himself would consider the failure of this movement as one of the greatest misfortunes that ever befell the human race; he defines the Revolution as the "first practical triumph of philosophy, the first example of a form of government which is founded on principles and upon a consistent, logical system." He terms it "an attempt to better humanity on a large scale," or "the greatest work which history can show," and sincerely mourns the death of Mirabeau. But his utterances are soon tinged with a pessimistic undertone, and in April, 1791, he begins to fear that the Revolution may eventually fail.[16]

We have no direct information about Gentz's attitude toward the Revolution during the period between the middle of April, 1791, and the end of 1792, as his letters to Garve from this time are not preserved and other material is not available. We know, however, this much that he followed the events in France with a very watchful eye. As early as 1790 he is reading Mallet du Pan's *Mercure de France*, Mirabeau's *Courier de Provence* and the reports

[12]Weick, I, 258 f., note.

[13]*Ibid.*, II, 45, note.

[14]Guglia, *Friedrich von Gentz*, 98.

[15]There are only a few of them: *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 178 ff., 203 ff.

[16]*Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 205.

of the sessions of the National Assembly.[17] He praises the *Mercure* with reference to its style, but can not yet agree with its tendencies; three years later, however, he calls the paper the best French publication since the death of Voltaire.[18] The reports received his high praise as first class sources for the study of the Revolution.[19] He mentions also other works and newspapers: Burke's *Reflections*, the *Moniteur* and the *Journal de Paris*, then in a general way, Brandes and Girtanner; of the last two he has no favorable impression, and in Burke he is at the time being pleased only with the form of presentation.[20] His review of the French political literature from August 1788 to June 1789 in the *Historisches Journal* of 1799 shows, however, that in his study of the Revolution he must have consulted many other publications besides those mentioned above; in 1796 he asks the library at Weimar for the privilege of using its literature on the Revolution, and in 1798 the number of newspapers which he is reading and excerpting regularly has grown to many German, five French, and three English ones.[21] The events in France had apparently got a permanent hold upon his mind, as he himself acknowledges in 1790 and again in 1798.[22]

The sympathetic attitude of Gentz toward the Revolution did, however, not last very long, for as early as the beginning of 1793, he appeared as its foe, with the translation of Burke's *Reflections*, and five political treatises from his own pen.[23] The pro-revolutionary utterances which have been preserved of him extend, as we know, not beyond the middle of April, 1791; and since we may assume, on the other hand, that he began his work on Burke and

[17] *Ibid.*, I, 178 ff.

[18] *Ibid.*, II, 40.

[19] Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xxvii.

[20] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 203 ff.

[21] *H. J.*, 1799, II, 176 ff. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 206 f., 220 f., 223, note, 224.

[22] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 180, 207.

[23] The two volumes of this work actually appeared at the close of 1792, but bore the date 1793.

the five essays, at latest in the fall of 1792, the change in his attitude toward the Revolution must have taken place in the period determined by these two limits. Exactly when and why it took place is not easy to say, nor is it important. The reading of Burke doubtless had some influence. We have, however, no means of determining the exact extent of this influence as Burke's theories in many leading points—in their marked tendency toward political conservatism, in their emphasis on justice in general and property rights in particular, in their conception of equality, in their indifference to all theories and exaltation of wisdom and experience—correspond exactly with those which Gentz could already have become acquainted with in Cicero or Garve. It is, however, probable that Gentz was not inconsiderably influenced by Burke in his estimate of the events themselves in France, and in his determination to join the ranks of the fighters. The same might be said about a possible influence of Mallet du Pan. Of much greater importance in this regard was the course of the Revolution itself. Gentz soon saw more and more clearly that the movement not only meant no realization of his ideals, but even an increasing deterioration of the existing conditions; he began to doubt the value of liberty and of equality in the sense of their revolutionary interpretation, and the antipathy which thus had gradually been gathering came finally with relative suddenness to a climax. When this stage was reached can not be said definitely. All indications, however, point to the events of the 10th to 13th of August, 1792, as those which brought about the climax; the bloody scenes of the 2nd to 7th of September, and the remainder of that "ever horrible year", 1792, only made Gentz's attitude a permanent one.[24] "The last and most terrible period of the French Revolution", he says in 1794, . . . "began with the horrors of the 10th of August." This opinion was quite correct in so far as those days did mark the

[24]Weick, II, 301, 159. Translation of Mallet du Pan, 45, note, 74, note, 97, note, 142, note.

beginning of what Gentz calls "the systematic overthrow of all social conditions".[25] It was also more or less the opinion of the many German observers of the events beyond the Rhine who after having sympathized with the Revolution finally turned against it. There were, according to Gentz's own testimony, in Germany people professing democracy up to the 5th of October, 1789, to the opening of the Legislative Assembly, to the 10th of August, 1792, to the execution of the King and so on;[26] for the majority of the German democrats, however, this 10th of August marked the turning point in their attitude toward the Revolution.[27].

2. 1793—1801.

Gentz was now an enemy of the Revolution and remained so during the next ten years of his life. As his nature would not permit him to be idle under such circumstances, he girded his loins and went forth to battle.

How far he fought the Revolution through the medium of the spoken word is hard to say; our sources are for the most part silent about this. Opportunity for such activity certainly was not wanting to him. During the whole period of this struggle, he was living at Berlin as an official of the Prussian civil service; his position was by no means an important one, but he possessed from the beginning connections and these together with his own resourcefulness won him in time a place in the higher social life of Berlin. Up to 1797, we find in his letters especial references to an intercourse with families of the middle class such as the Ancillon, Spalding, Engel, Gilly, Hainchelin, Merian, Herz and others; names of the nobility are, however, also mentioned, as for instance that of W. von Humboldt. Little by little Gentz's social environment becomes higher, and between 1800 and 1802, he moves in the upper circles of society; he is now acquainted with Prince Louis Ferdi-

[25]Translation of Mallet du Pan, 75, note.

[26]*Ibid.*, pref., xxi.

[27]Lang, *Von und aus Schwaben,* III, 69.

mand of Prussia, with the duke of Braunschweig-Öls, the ambassadors of various foreign powers, such as Lord Carisford of England, Prince Reuss and Count Stadion of Austria, Count Panin of Russia and Brinckmann of Sweden, with Lucchesini, the later Prussian representative at Paris, and with Haugwitz.[28] This undeniable success he owed to a combination of fortunate circumstances. His father was, after 1779, director general of the royal mint, and one of his uncles, an Ancillon, counsellor of the consistory in Berlin. Moreover, he had patrons and friends who boomed him socially, such as Captain von Schack, Brinckmann, the Swedish envoy, and the Marquise of Lucchesini.[29] Finally, we must here take into account his own social talents, his growing reputation and his lavish expenditure of the money extracted from the coffers of the British foreign Office and the treasuries of helpful people in general. But, whatever Gentz, in these circles, may have done against the Revolution, the centre of his anti-revolutionary activities lay certainly elsewhere: in his anti-revolutionary publications. The first of these, as noted above, were his translation of Burke's *Reflections* and the five essays *Über politische Freiheit; Über die Moralität in den Staats revolutionen; Über die Deklaration der Rechte; Versuch einer Widerlegung der Apologie des Herrn Makintosh;* and *Über die Nationalerziehung in Frankreich.* In 1794 his translation of Mallet du Pan's work on the French Revolution appeared; likewise, in 1795, that of a part of Mounier's "The Causes which have hindered France from attaining Freedom," and in 1797 a translation and continuation of d'Ivernois' "History of the Financial Administration of the French Republic during the year 1796." Independent works were: *Über die Grundprincipien der jetzigen französichen Verfassung, nach Robespierre's und St. Just's Darstellung derselben*

[28]Schlesier, V, 24 ff.

[29]According to Gentz himself, it was she who introduced him into upper Berlin society (*Festschrift zu Gustav Schmollers 70. Geburtstag,* 249); but perhaps he here simply desires to flatter.

from 1794, *Über den Ursprung und Charakter des Krieges gegen die französische Revolution*, and *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa vor und nach der französischen Revolution*, the last two both from 1801. Finally, there are to be mentioned two periodicals which were mostly written by Gentz himself, the *Neue teutsche Monatsschrift* and the *Historisches Journal*. The *Historisches Journal*, the more important one, was purely political and financial in content and appeared from 1799 to 1800. The work on the history of the French Revolution, upon which Gentz worked during the nineties, has never been printed; it exists, however, as a manuscript ready for print, and consists of five volumes.[30] Of all publications, the series of articles in the *Historisches Journal* of 1799, bearing the titles *Über den Gang der öffentlichen Meinung in Europa in Rücksicht auf die französische Revolution*, and *Betrachtungen über die Entstehung der französischen Revolution*, give the clearest insight into Gentz's views about the causes and the first period of the Revolution.

In these nineties falls also the beginning of Gentz's connections with foreign governments and personages, which from then on played an ever increasing rôle in his life. We know already that he gradually became acquainted with various foreign representatives accredited to the court of Berlin. His relations with Austria began through his sending the translation of Burke to Emperor Francis; later he received the permission to sell copies of his *Historisches Journal* in the Austrian duchies.[31] He must also have come into touch with leading men in Russia, for in May 1800 his diaries speak of his receiving a present from the Czar.[32]

The first establishment of relations with England followed in 1795; Gentz published in his *Neue Teutsche Monatsschrift* a translation of a portion of d'Ivernois' study on republican finance which aroused Pitt's interest

[30] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 245, 246, note 1.

[31] Guglia, *Friedrich von Gentz*, 137.

[32] *Tagebücher* I, 1.

and caused him to urge the author to continue his work.[33] 1799 Gentz presented to the English secretary of state, Lord Grenville, an article which had appeared in the *Historisches Journal* and dealt with Pitt's financial policy; he added the request that the article be laid before the King. Grenville replied with a letter and a check.[34] November, 1800, Gentz sent two memorials to London. In the first he pictures the condition of popular opinion on the Continent toward England; in the second he offers his services to the English government as journalistic representative, and this offer seems to have been accepted.[35] In October 1802, Gentz went himself to England, where he remained some three months. His personal success was great;[36] but this was only natural, for he was peculiarly fitted for the life of the then existing English society: he had the instincts of the grand-seigneur, was a brilliant conversationalist, and could endure any amount of the gay life. He himself was in a perfect rapture, for he felt, for the first time, the delicious inspiration of satisfied ambition; for a brief moment he mingled with the mighty as an equal. At the same time he reached an agreement with the British government; it has never become known what instructions he received, but in general he was expected to act as an English agent on the continent.[37] If this step later brought him under suspicion, it must be said that he by no means intended bartering his convictions; this he never did, not even under the most trying pressure. English policy was, after all, in its main features, only the one advocated by himself, for it aimed at France, and he really believed that in serving England he was serving Europe. That he accepted remuneration for his services was not only quite proper but even necessary; for without sufficient funds he could never hope to

[33]Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Friedrich Gentz*, I, 84.
[34]*Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 466.
[35]*Ibid.*, CX, 467.
[36]Schlesier, V, 28.
[37]*Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 468.

gain entrance into those circles by which the course of foreign policies was shaped.

A number of causes contributed to make of Gentz thus, by degrees, a rather many-sided personality. Gentz had, as we know, an inborn and increasing interest in politics, and that he could, as a Prussian subaltern, not practically indulge; he seized, therefore, the only way which offered an outlet for his feelings: the pen. Furthermore, he was ambitious and of very luxurious inclinations; how was he to satify these tendencies in the service of the Prussian state where, as he explains to Adam Müller, he could only hope to reach the position of privy counsellor of finances, carrying a salary of two thousand thaler?[38] And was writing not a positive pleasure to him which he could never long forego? If he industriously wove at the net in which his fortune was to become entangled, he did in this certainly not think of himself alone, nor even principally: all the various lines of his activity were, after all, converging toward the one aim of opposing the Revolution, and this opposition he regarded as a sacred duty which had to be fulfilled whatever one's own inclinations might be.[39] Not that he expected certain results of his efforts, for these, he thought, were, in the flood of pro-revolutionary writings, somewhat doubtful and uncertain.[40] But he wished to do his part to further the good cause; it might, perhaps, be of some use and bear unexpected fruit.

In how far Gentz here allowed himself to be influenced by Burke it is hard to say, but the latter's example can hardly have been entirely without effect. Gentz himself seems to point to the existence of such an influence, for in the introduction to his translation of Burke we find the passage: "In most of the important proceedings of his time, Burke was an opponent of the ministry, because the influence of the court extended beyond the proper point

[38] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 369.

[39] Weick, I, 2, 14, 18. Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xiv ff. xix.

[40] Weick, I, 7-14.

of equilibrium, because it threatened to annihilate or to weaken the power of the representatives of the people. Burke took up the cause of the Americans with a warmth which he may well thank for much of his great name; because they were, although they were Britons, denied the British constitution, because he found according to the maxims of true British polity that their demands were just; because he divined the strength of their opposition and the probable outcome of the unfortunate war which was forced upon them, with more accuracy than a blinded ministry did."[41] That which Gentz praises in Burke applied equally well to himself: one has only to recall his stern standpoint of justice, his initial sympathy with constitutions, and his later opposition to Cobenzl, against whom he also hurls the word "blinded;" he fights, it is true, not against but for the preponderance of court influence. It is, therefore, quite possible that Gentz took up the fight against the Revolution—which from his point of view was preeminently a struggle for the right—inspired, among others, by Burke, especially since he had learned from the latter's career, what a name could be won by championing the right.

Not much more certain is the influence which Mallet du Pan may have had on Gentz. Gentz and Mallet stood, since 1793, closely enough together in their political views. Both rejected the principle of popular sovereignty and fought for a stronger government; on the other hand, they were indifferent as to the particular form of the latter. Both corresponded with ministers and kings, both published periodicals and had close relations with England. These parallels could even be followed into the personal characters of the two men, for each was possessed of a marked preference for order and moderation in every thing, of a strong feeling of independence and a pronounced antipathy against all that was loud and violent. If one adds to this that Gentz repeatedly mentions Mallet in his

[41] *Ibid.*, I, 22.

letters,[42] that he translated or reviewed certain of his works,[43] that his *Historisches Journal*, according to his own testimony, was suggested and inspired by Mallet's *Mercure Brittannique*,[44] finally that in 1799 he corresponded with the then exiled pulicist,[45] the existence of an influence upon Gentz may seem to be rather probable. The exact extent of this influence, it is true, cannot be determined with certainty; only in the following point do we find ourselves, perhaps, upon firm ground. Mallet was from about 1793 on, for a number of years, the confidential adviser of various governments at war with the Revolution and sent, up to 1798, political reports to the courts of Vienna and Berlin; in 1800 he died. In this same year 1800, Gentz definitely offered the English government his services as publicist, and reported about the political situation on the Continent. It is, therefore, not altogether improbable that the latter cherished the hope that the mantle of the dead Mallet might fall upon him.

How, we may ask, does Gentz picture the Revolution to himself and what has he against it?

If we begin with the origin of the Revolution, we encounter first his distinction between its remote and its immediate causes; the former, Gentz terms the "conditions of possibility," the latter, "the conditions of reality."[46] The distinction is historically well-founded, and forms the basis of Gentz's general attitude toward the Revolution. He is convinced that France stood in absolute need of reforms, but that on the other hand, the Revolution, as it actually took place, could and should have been avoided.[47] The proper way to solve the difficulties as it then seemed to him was, as he once expresses it afterwards, by means of a "gentle revolution."[48]

[42] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 179 f., 255.
[43] *H. J.*, 1799 and 1800.
[44] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 327.
[45] *Ibid.*, 326 ff.
[46] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 38, 196.
[47] *Ibid.*, I, 198 ff., 229 ff.
[48] Translation of Mallet du Pan, 33, note.

Gentz describes the conditions of pre-revolutionary France with the instinct of the objective historian who is concerned above all with the establishment of the truth. On civilized Europe as a whole, he passes the judgment that before the Revolution it had reached an astonishing degree of perfection and was justified in still hoping for far more.[49] As its centre he considers France,[50] which, therefore, necessarily had its share in this high attainment of European civilization. That everything there was not what it should have been, he does not fail to recognize. He points out especially the bad system of taxation of the country; aside from this he mentions the subordination of agriculture to the interests of industry and the already decidedly appreciable overpupulation, as it seemed to him.[51] To the *lettres de cachet* he attaches, however, but small importance.[52] His judgment of Louis XVI is all in all a favorable one; he cannot, however, forbear to blame the weakness of the king, who did not rise to meet the situation.[53] He points out with special emphasis that monarch and government were sincerely ready for vital reforms; Turgot, he explains, proposed reforms "such as had never been conceived upon a throne."[54]

When, in spite of all, the Revolution came, the blame lay, according to Gentz, on what he terms the "conditions of its reality." He assumes that grave mistakes were made on all sides, by the king, by the government, by the representatives of the people, and finally by the people themselves. The greatest blame he lays, to be sure, to the score of the people and their representatives. The government fell short in that it neglected to suppress the general spirit of discontent, and to direct it by wise counsels into proper channels,[55] but above all, in that it showed lack

[49] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 18.
[50] Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xvii.
[51] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 208 ff.
[52] *Ibid.*, I, 215 f.
[53] *Ibid.*, I, 272 ff.
[54] *Ibid.*, I, 229, 235 ff., 293, 304 f.
[55] *Ibid.*, I, 31 ff.

of foresight and weakness.[56] When the government, as was the case, encountered perpetual opposition, it was its proper duty to break this opposition; but this it never attempted, much less accomplished.[57] The calling in of the estates of the realm was a good idea, for it was necessary, financially and otherwise; unfortunately, however, the government failed to regulate in advance the form of the deliberations, and thus made possible the chaos which almost immediately arose.[58] If we turn to the other side, we find Gentz pointing particularly to the influence of the revolutionary literature, to the attitude of the National Assembly, and the activity of the revolutionary leaders.[59] He is inclined to attribute to the leaders a large part of the blame. But the people too he finds blameworthy. "When the Revolution of 1789 approached," he writes in 1799, "the amiability of this nation [the French] had to a large degree disappeared . . . . A deeply rooted discontent, a restless longing for destructive novelty had taken the place of the old peaceful good nature . . . . The frame of mind of the entire nation had grown more hostile, gloomy, brooding, and tragic. The Revolution bore in its approach, in its outbreak, and in its whole course, the stamp of this mood, [a mood] "which superficial observers considered a result of that tremendous event, but which held priority over that event and was rather one of its causes."[60] It is true, Gentz does not overlook the fact that one of the causes of the Revolution lay, in a certain sense, within the revolt itself, insofar as every one of its events advanced its development just one step farther.

The object of Gentz's special antipathy were the revolutionary leaders, for they, of course, were the rebels *par excellence*. Sieyès was to him the chief figure of the early Revolution;[61] Marat, on the other hand, probably the most

[56] *Ibid.*, I, 298, 321; II, 30, 55 ff., 245.
[57] *Ibid.*, I, 301.
[58] *Ibid.*, II, 15 ff., 25 ff., 56 ff.
[59] *Ibid.*, II, 138 ff., 172 ff. Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xxiv.
[60] *H. J.*, 1799, II, 160 ff.
[61] *Ibid.*, II, 297, 306 ff. Translation of Mallet du Pan, 66 ff. note.

horrible product of the whole revolutionary era.[62] Gentz's judgment of Rousseau was not always exactly the same. We know that he was, at one time, deeply interested in this personality and had found refreshment in the depths of its sentiment; it was in those early years when his emotional heart was still able to give itself up unreservedly to friendship and to the quiet enjoyment of nature. This reverence for Rousseau lingered down to 1792; Rousseau, Gentz still thinks, portrays the simplicity, the purity and the bliss of the true man of nature, and in that consists the real tendency of all his ideas.[63] Quite different from this, however, is his judgment in 1794. Now he regards Rousseau from a purely political viewpoint, and thus the man whom he had previously so highly respected has now become an object of antipathy, almost of the most bitter hatred. But how could it have been otherwise? Rousseau's name was in the mouths of all enemies of the old system, he was the father of the doctrine of the unconditional popular sovereignty and was himself a man of the people, of large ideas and an excess of feeling, but, in a general sense, vulgar as well. Small wonder, then, that Gentz now hated this man and hurled at him the charge that out of his school all the French revolutionists from Sieyès to Marat had issued, and that to his fingers the innocently shed blood of the victims of the Revolution was sticking.[64]

The distinction between momentary and permanent causes of the Revolution made it hard for Gentz to find a definite beginning for that period. He considered the great turning point of events to be the second half of the year 1792; what happened in those bloody autumn days made him forever a foe of the new era. But where was the beginning? It was hard to name an entirely certain point in time, consequently Gentz lays the emphasis now on one and now on another of the eventful days of the summer of 1789: on the 17th of June, the 14th of July, the time from

[62]Translation of Mallet du Pan, 92, note.

[63]Weick, I, 138 ff., note.

[64]Translation of Mallet du Pan, 20 ff., note.

July to October, and on the 5th-6th of October. In 1793 he declares that the originator of the system of double representation for the third estate was the real cause of the Revolution, and names in this connection Necker;[65] since Necker proposed this idea to the royal council on the 17th of December, 1788, the real beginning of the Revolution would then be this day. Somewhat different is the dating which Gentz presents in the same year in reviewing the statement of the Scotch writer Makintosh. Here he mentions especially the 5th of May, the 17th of June—according to him it had been the 15th of June—and the 14th of July, and assumes that the Revolution was perfected through the sanction, by the National Assembly, of the storming of the Bastille.[66] In 1794 he sees the source of all the excesses of the Revolution in the activity of the National Assembly from July 1789 to the meeting of the Convention.[67] In 1799 he returns, in a certain sense, to the 17th of June—no longer the 15th—and declares that this day marked "one of the greatest and most fearful epochs in the history of mankind."[68]

Gentz never really attempted to fix the date of the end of the Revolution. In 1794 he still believed it to be coming;[69] but soon he drops such speculations. In 1798 he even fears that the Revolution may extend into eastern Europe.[70] With the *Coup d'État* he again indulges in hope, only soon after to let it fall again:[71] he could, after all, not eternally close his eyes to the fact that Bonaparte was not only the conqueror of the Revolution, but also the heir.

As to the significance of the Revolution as an historical event of the first magnitude, Gentz was never for a moment in doubt. As evidence of this we may cite a word to be

[65]Weick, I, 84, note.
[66]*Ibid.*, II, 116-128.
[67]Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xxiv ff.
[68]*H. J.*, 1799, II, 308.
[69]Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xxxiii f.
[70]*Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 210.
[71]Cf. p. 86 f.

found in the introduction to his translation of Mallet du Pan, which throws, at the same time, a highly characteristic light upon his entire attitude toward this event.[72] He writes there: "The French Revolution is one of the facts which belong to the whole human race. It is an event of such magnitude that it is hardly permissible to be occupied with any petty interest in its fearful presence, of such magnitude that posterity will be curious to know how people of all countries who lived at the close of the 18th century thought, felt, reasoned and acted about it. Even if it had exercised no direct influence upon other nations, it would still deserve the entire, lasting and eager attention of the world because it hit the most notable of all civilized countries, the true centre of Europe, from which proceeded the entire external culture, and most of the inner culture, of our hemisphere, because it promised a constitution—the most desirable thing which thinking beings can wish for—for a society of 25 millions of the most active, cultured, enlightened, talented, clever and good-natured people, and because, although from its inception to the present time it has been nothing but one great departure from its glorious aim, it had at least to furnish the largest mass of experiences out of which the theory of statesmanship has ever been developed, corrected, and confirmed."[73]

Gentz emphasizes at times how infinitely complicated the developments of the events in France had been. But the chaos there does not seem to him to be completely hopeless; he distinguishes between the essential and the necessary phenomena, and sifts from the mass of material that which he terms "the leading principles" of the Revolution.[74] Against these he directs his chief attacks.

What, then, are the fundamental principles of the Revolution, as seen by Gentz?

In 1793 he gives not yet any really comprehensive statement of his views; the list of his *gravamina* against the

[72] Of 1794.

[73] Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xvi ff.

[74] *Ibid.*, pref. xxiii f. *H. J.*, 1799, II, 335 ff.

Revolution is, however, long enough. He emphasizes the great danger with which Europe is being threatened from the West.[75] Furthermore, he accuses the Revolution of fanatical intolerance, of disregard for property, of vanity and hypocrisy, love of destruction, general lawlessness, irreligion and a deeply rooted hatred of everything lofty, even of the aristocracy of spirit.[76] The object of his special antipathy is, of course, the principle of the sovereignty of the people. In his treatises of 1793, there is scarcely a page on which the words "liberty" and "equality" are not made the object of bitter criticism. Gentz thinks that he is laying his finger at the very root of all the evil, when he says: "There can be no absolutely incurably sick person, save he who takes pleasure in his pains. This is, however, the real condition of the French people. Every suffering is sweet to them, if they only can dream of their self-government. Their happiness is the happiness of a madman who does not feel the whip of his jailor because he considers himself the King of Kings. If one goes to the bottom of this political dreaming, then the garment of a few high-sounding phrases disappears; and what remains is—the fanaticism of vanity."[77]

On the declaration of human rights, Gentz expresses himself in 1793, and then again in 1800, both times in the same tone.[78] His judgment is exceptionally unfavorable. The very idea of such a declaration displeases him exceedingly; for the enumeration and classification of the simple human rights, he thinks not only hardly possible, but, if actually attempted, dangerous. He considers it an absolute error to term these fundamental rights, the "rights of men and citizens." A combination of this kind is, according to him, nothing but an absurdity. Of the separate articles of the declaration, scarcely a single one is left unattacked, and special emphasis is laid upon the fact that the so-

[75] Weick, I, 20.

[76] *Ibid.*, I, 15 ff., 186 ff., note, 257 f., note, 312, note, 281, note; II, 34.

[77] *Ibid.*, I, 257 f., note.

[78] *Ibid.*, II, 61 ff., *H. J.*, 1800, I, 58, ff.

called "natural rights" are, in this case, only the result of a great number of compromises. Gentz does not fail to admit that the declaration, as a whole, had been of great historical importance, but it can be imagined of what kind he conceived this importance to be; as a matter of fact, he unhesitatingly attributes to this declaration a great part of the general anarchy which followed it.

Extremely severe is the judgment passed upon the Revolution by Gentz in 1794. The list of sins which he attributes to it in the introduction and the notes to his translation of Mallet du Pan has now become a formidable one, and one cannot help being struck with Gentz's intense hatred of the revolutionary leaders. He refers to the daily executions, to the murder of the royal family, the atheistic temples, the cult of Marat, the revolutionary tendency to worldliness, the destruction of the Vendée and the city of Lyons, to the superficial speculations and the self-complacency of the tribunes of the people, to the increasing plundering of the rich, the disregard of all morality and the tearing down of everything lofty, adding not without a certain bitter satisfaction that there it could at last be seen to what the "madness and perversity of an unrestrained people" would lead.[79] References to the cruelty and phrase-mongering, to the vanity, the lawlessness and general vulgarity of the revolutionary movement and its leaders are in fact to be found almost everywhere.[80] Incidentally, Gentz now and then sums up these characteristics of the Revolution in a single word, and speaks of "mob-tyranny," or of "the systematic reversal of all social conditions."[81]

In his *Historisches Journal* of 1799, Gentz exhibits, to a certain degree, the assurance of one who has had the satisfaction of seeing his warnings justified by the course of events. Here, too, he speaks of the injustice and tyranny

[79] Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., vi f., x.

[80] *Ibid.*, 25 f., note, 56, note, 94 ff., note, 150 f., note.

[81] *Ibid.*, pref., xii, 74 f., note.

of the Revolution, of its harshness against the upper classes of the earlier era, of its hostility towards the property-holders and, above all, of its fundamental principle of the sovereignty of the people.[82] As to the revolutionary literature, he criticizes its entire lack of consideration of individual rights, its tendency to go to extremes and the desire for novelty, its discrediting of the value of moderation and experience, its lack of historical sense and, as is to be expected, again, its doctrine of popular sovereignty.[83] He repeats the idea expressed already in the manifesto of the allies of the year 1792, and later on by Mallet, that the Revolution was equivalent to a relapse toward barbarism.[84] With especial satisfaction, however, he mentions the report of the commissioner François of June 21, 1798, in which the Directory is charged with having suppressed all and every form of freedom in France, the political, civil and personal liberty, the freedom of thought and the safety of property.[85] Likewise, he refers to the report of commissioner Trouvé of August 30, 1798, for in this he finds a description of the conditions in the Cisalpine Republic, such as from his standpoint he could not wish any better. According to Trouvé, there existed in this state "a government without means and strength, equally powerless to accomplish the good and to prevent the evil, an ignorant, wholly pernicious administration, a military equipment which despite its immense costliness is of no value at all, a complete disorganization of finances, no republican institutions, no public education, no connection existing between civil laws, on all hands disobedience, indifference, unpunished waste of public money, in a word, the most complete and most horrible anarchy."[86] These then were the alleged blessings of the Revolution!

To the relations of the Revolution to other powers,

[82] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 57 ff., 343, note, II, 145 ff., 464 f.
[83] *Ibid.*, II, 138 ff.
[84] *Ibid.*, I, 29 f., note.
[85] *Ibid.*, II, 431 ff.
[86] *Ibid.*, I, 338 ff.

Gentz did not give, for a long time, any mentionable attention, other than to fear an invasion of Europe by revolutionary principles. The war which had been dragging on since 1792, he still regards even in 1794 as, on the whole, of little importance. It has not yet brought any success to the allies, and cannot be carried on with much more energy; therefore, Gentz concludes, it would probably be best to let France alone.[87] The volcano in the West, however, did not burn out; on the contrary, the danger to Europe became more and more serious. The year 1796 brought the invasion of Jourdan and Moreau into central and southern Germany and Bonaparte's brilliant campaign in Italy; 1797, the peace of Campo Formio and the opening of the Congress of Rastadt; 1798, the French occupation of Rome, the intervention in Switzerland, extensive French preparations for a landing in England, and Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt; finally 1800,—after French reverses in 1798—two victories that, according to Gentz, were the most brilliant which the revolutionary armies ever had gained.[88] By the end of 1800, France had thus reconquered its great European position of former times. It now stood at the head of a confederation which embraced almost the whole of southern Europe; the landmarks of the Republic had been advanced to the Rhine and at its head stood—Bonaparte, in Gentz's opinion the first really significant man of the Revolution.[89] Besides, the great problem of the new territorial arrangements to be made in Germany, the result of the peace of Lunéville, demanded a settlement, and that France would have a hand in this could not be doubted for one moment. Apprehensive watchfulness had now apparently become imperative, since the Revolution had ceased to be a mere intellectual danger.

The first indications that Gentz was aware of this are to be found in two letters to Garve of March and April, 1798.[90] French politics, he writes to this still highly re-

[87] Translation of Mallet du Pan, pref., xxxiii ff.

[88] Weick, II, 333.

[89] *Ibid.*, II, 372, note.

[90] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 206, 210.

spected friend, have now risen to "such tremendous importance" that one cannot avoid devoting to them doubled attention. The year 1798 is even now the most significant of all the years of the revolutionary era, and still greater things are yet to be expected: the outcome of the expedition against England will decide the fate of Europe; if it succeeds, and if within the next six months no new continental war breaks out, then the tricolor will be waving at the Vistula even before the close of the century. Europe seems destined to encounter in this present year fresh storms and further destruction, and the end of the Revolution is not yet in sight. The mention which Gentz makes here of a doubled attentiveness to the events in the West was not merely a passing idea; he indeed does become absorbed more and more in the increasingly complicated international affairs of Europe. Already the *Historisches Journal* of 1799 contained several articles on the matter, and in the following years Gentz is well-nigh given up to the study of these new problems. He feels that the first act of the great drama is ended; if he previously has hoped that the Revolution would consume itself, he now realizes definitely that this can no longer be thought of.

The picture that he draws of the European situation in the second half of 1800 must, therefore, unavoidably be a gloomy one.[91] The war had now lasted eight years, for eight years he himself had fought for the good cause, and yet—what had been achieved! The Revolution was not yet ended; on the contrary, it had established itself in the European family and was more dangerous than ever. For a moment, it is true, Gentz believed that the *Coup d'État* meant its formal conclusion.[92] But he soon abandons this hope, and even while entertaining it, he expected far more for the internal conditions of France than for the relations of that country to the other powers; for these he regards, even after 1799, only with suspicion and concern. What

[91] *H. J.*, 1800, II, 394 ff., III, 788 ff.

[92] Cf. p. 86f.

would the future bring? France, he thinks, has been, to the present, the centre of Europe and will continue to be so for some time to come; as long as it retains its spirit of restlessness and of military agression, Europe will have to tremble. The era of blood is then not yet at an end; the French sword but rests in the scabbard, and this scabbard may be thrown aside at any moment. A warrior state has established itself in the western part of the Continent whose finances are, it is true, irreparably ruined, whose expansive powers, however, remain unweakened; its trade is war, and without war it cannot exist. And the present? It is bad enough. The Revolution, Gentz states at the end of 1800, has destroyed the old political system of Europe, it has altered the beautiful balance of power among the nations, has set might above right, has made war universal, and has accustomed the world to usurpation and violence. The path to peace leads through numerous further struggles, and that, he concludes, "is the sad legacy with which the closing eighteenth century endows the present generation, and perhaps many a one to come."

As to the secret of the republican successes, it is evident that a problem so eminently practical necessarily made a strong appeal to a man such as Gentz. He touches upon it more than once, most extensively in his work, *Über den Ursprung und Charakter des Krieges gegen die französische Revolution*, published in 1801, where he expresses himself as follows.[93] He begins with a reference to the very favorable strategic position of France, to the fertility of its soil, to its wealth and the efficiency of its inhabitants; this, he thinks, explains the riddle in part, but, it is true, by no means fully. In the last analysis, he finds, the republican successes can be explained only from two causes, from the spirit of the Revolution itself and from the mistakes of its enemies. In how far, then, from the Revolution itself? Not, perhaps, to the extent which would have been true if really great talents had been

[93] Weick, II, 306 ff., 371 ff.

at its disposal; Gentz is at best ready to grant that the Revolution produced military talent. It was brought about by parvenus and mediocre intelligences, and did not until Bonaparte appeared give birth to any really great man. Of the military talents existing within the nation it did make full use, and in this lies one of the causes of its success. It has further carried on the war in an entirely new fashion, which will now have to be adopted by other European powers. The resources of France were put to the severest test and, in many regards, exhausted for a long time to come, but despite all waste, it supported itself and withstood the attack from all sides, for in time it had learned the lesson that a war could be carried on even without money. Wherever it went, it found the soil ready for its seed: everywhere it met partisans, its first blow fell upon a disunited Germany, and the terror which preceded its coming did the rest. Above all, it is true, the Revolution stirred up the enthusiasm of the French people. Even though this might fluctuate, it never really died out; at any rate it sufficed, as conditions then were, since the enthusiasm of the allied troops always remained within narrow bounds. The country had to be saved, the world to be freed and avenged, and the conspirators to be punished; forward, then, in the name of freedom! Who could resist such an appeal? And thus the armies of the Republic marched against the enemy, poorly drilled and poorly clothed, but surrounded by and filled with the magic of the revolutionary faith, until gradually there arose a new and equally powerful agent of victory: the ambition of invincibility. In spite of all this splendid energy of the Revolution, however, its success, Gentz assumes, never would have come to pass, if the Coalition had not made the gravest mistakes. An iron destiny had brought this great crisis upon Europe; it was a case, therefore, of either submitting to it or of putting everything at stake against it. The Coalition chose the policy of resistance, but did not throw all its energies into the struggle; it blundered in its choice of the moment for opening hostilities, it underrated the

resources of the enemy, possessed no military leaders of real significance and came to no concerted action. The result of it all, naturally, was in keeping with the effort.

But what now? This was, after all, the paramount question. Should the fight go on, or was it better to let things take their own course? Gentz is for the former. But he does not look for success as long as the old methods are adhered to; new ways and means must be tried, and such he believes to have discovered.[94] The course of the revolutionary wars has shown to him what could be done by a nation that was ready to make any sacrifices; he demands, therefore, that the example given here be followed. Let public enthusiasm be exhorted, be aroused; let the revolutionary arguments be met in print, through sermons and popular instruction; let the unfit be eliminated and the talented be supported; and change the methods of warfare! But this, he thinks, will by no means suffice. What is needed, above all, are coalitions that will carry on the war with republican energy and will be strong enough to insure success. But what coalitions should these be? Gentz has in mind, especially, one between Austria and Prussia, for this, if once consummated, would not only in itself represent a formidable combination, but would also bring about the union of the whole of Europe outside of France. Prussia must give up its neutrality, this then is the advice which Gentz now gives, disagreeing entirely with his earlier tendencies. In 1797,[95] and even in the beginning of 1799,[96] he still recommended to Prussia a policy of reserve. In May, 1799, however, he seems to wish a more or less decisive and warlike line of action on Prussia's part;[97] in 1800, he censures Prussia's attitude during the previous year,[98] and in 1801, he finally comes out openly in favor of

[94]Weick, II, 355 ff., 367 ff., 373 ff., *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa vor und nach der französischen Revolution*, cf. Guglia, *Friedrich* von Gentz, 168 f.

[95]Weick, V, 7, 9.

[96]*Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 323.

[97]*Ibid.*, I, 332.

[98]*Histor. Zeitschr.*, LXXXIX, 245 ff.

the Austrian-Prussian coalition. He is even ready to consent to a temporary suspension of the imperial constitution, if thereby a better use could be made of Germany's powers; at the outbreak of the revolutionary war, or at least during it, he thinks, the Emperor should have been officially clothed with the provisional powers of a dictator for the southern half of the "Empire", and the king of Prussia likewise, for its northern half.[99] That in the future such states as Switzerland should be allowed to remain neutral he considers improbable; at any rate, he himself would not be able to approve of such a policy. Whoever, he declares, does not join the cause of justice of his own free will, can and must be forced to do so; for in situations like the present, there is but one right to be recognized, that of necessity.

It was for Gentz a matter of course that the one power to which, before all others, he looked for help, England would in time unite itself with this continental coalition. This is even a matter of the heart with him. For, whenever he speaks of England, he speaks of it only in hyperboles: the rock of justice, the home of religion and of reverence for the customs of the fathers, the starting point of all beneficent and truly cosmopolitan undertakings, the centre of industry and trade, and the born and permanent ally of the well understood interests of all nations—all this and more England seems to him.[100] That it was also possible to hear quite different remarks about this same England, is not unknown to Gentz, for he too has heard them; but he purposes to show that such words are but stupid or malicious calumny.[101] What then were the charges against England? A monopoly of industry and trade, the starvation of the Continent, the destruction of the freedom of the seas? Gentz does not deny that England now, at the end of the century, does possess a monopoly of industry and trade and a supremacy over the seas; most emphatically he

[99] Weick, II, 369 f.

[100] *H. J.*, 1800, III, 492 ff.

[101] *Ibid.*, 1799, I, 395-439; III, 380 f.; 1800, III, 496 f.

contends, however, that the British power does not threaten the rest of Europe outside of France, and calls special attention to the fact that this power was only the direct result of the Revolution itself. The line of argumentation used by him to support this standpoint is about as follows: 1. The English industrial and trade monopoly, and the English maritime supremacy are chiefly the consequences of the hopeless inner conditions of France, and, only to a subordinate degree, of the ability of the English themselves; 2. England cannot mean to wish the poverty of the Continent in its own interest, for poor neighbors are also poor customers; 3. England, will, because of its high development and its lofty principles, never become "really menacing" to any state; 4. a substitution of France for England would not be advantageous for the interests of Europe; the destruction of the English position, without at the same time providing for a compensation, would even be a calamity; 5. the ideal condition would be that of an equal apportionment of the sea-trade among the three great trading nations, England, France and Holland, and of the intermediate trade among the trading states of second rank; such a condition of equilibrium existed before the Revolution and will return as soon as Europe will have attained to a true peace. England is, therefore, as it now is, the blessing and the last hope of the world. "For this reason," Gentz declares, "every thinking person and every heart that wishes the human race well must take an active interest in the British nation, even though every personal interest were ever so far removed; for this reason, no enlightened European will be able to perceive England's prosperity without exclaiming with that dying patriot: *Esto perpetua!*"[102]

The praise that Gentz thus bestows upon the English state and nation is indeed a very high one; it is, however, not on that account less genuine. How are we to explain it? Certainly not from the fact that Gentz, at this time, was coming into closer touch with the British government

[102] *H. J.*, 1799, III, 381.

and was received into its service; this may have been of some significance, but surely not of fundamental importance. No, the praise was genuine, coming from a man who flattered only when he could do so with conviction. And was it, after all, so out of the ordinary to feel admiration for the greatness of the British name? Many felt this, why then not Gentz as well? Why not he of all others? England was, as he believed, the last bulwark against the French flood, and the permanent defender of that European balance of power, which was so dear to him; it possessed a well-tempered form of government; it breathed by its subsidies ever new life into the struggle against the Revolution, and had preserved much of the aristocratic perfume of the ancient regime; how could Gentz have failed to adore such a country! As a matter of fact, his sympathy for England extended—with interruptions—even beyond the Revolution and Napoleon: as late as 1819 he defends its policies against the attacks of the Abbé de Pradt.[103] Later his sympathy, it is true, waned considerably.

Whether Gentz, by this, showed himself an impartial and clear-sighted judge of actual conditions may, of course, be doubted. He had early identified himself with a definite line of policy, from which he would not and could not depart easily later on. Furthermore, the transactions of the cabinets were known to him only in outline, or so far as the official reports about them had been made public; on a basis like this, a proper orientation was, however, impossible. Finally, there was what we may call Gentz's continentalism. His eyes were always turned, first of all, toward the West, for there he saw the lurking danger to Germany and to the Continent; but that this same West, France, in turn might be looking toward the North and feel itself challenged and threatened from that direction, he never seriously considered.

For about ten years, from 1792 to 1801, Gentz thus fought against republican France with a pen dipped in hate and fear. Then he buried himself in silence for a brief

[103]Weick, V, 289 ff., 298 ff.

moment; he believed he had reasons to assume that the Revolution now had ended, and besides, his political affairs had temporarily become too much deranged. But in 1803 he again takes up his rejected pen and plunges into a new struggle. As it seems, he has deceived himself: the Revolution is, after all, apparently not yet over; so he is fighting once more, this time, however, against the ambitions of one single man, the heir of the Revoltuion, Napoleon Bonaparte.

To show what form this second struggle of Gentz's took will be the purpose of the following chapter.

III. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NAPOLEON

1. Before the Struggle: 1798-1802.

On the ninth of November, 1799, Napoleon by the *Coup d'État* put himself at the head of the French nation; on the second of August, 1802, he was elected by a plebiscite, consul for life; and on the eighteenth of May, 1804, the Senate and the Tribunes proclaimed him emperor of the French.

These three events formed at once the end and the consolidation of the Revolution. Napoleon liked to call himself the child of the latter, and in a certain sense, rightly so; he was, however, as much its subduer as its heir, and one may be in doubt as to whether he should be viewed more from the one standpoint than from the other.

The four constitutions of his reign—those of 1799, 1802, 1804 and 1815—were formally, at least, founded on popular sovereignty. The constitution of 1799 was submitted to a plebiscite, of the two of 1802 and 1804 only one, but the principal question was placed before the people. Two other fundamental principles of the Revolution, those of equality and of individual liberty, Napoleon also maintained in a certain sense, and the same may be said of the new apportionment of property brought about by the Revolution; his highly developed system of police supervision limited, it is true, this liberty in no inconsiderable measure. In the sphere of foreign politics, Napoleon took over from the Revolution above all the hostility towards England in general, then the idea of invading the British Isles and attacking the English position in India, the exclusion of English goods from French territories and the strengthening of the trade and war marine of France; to this go back also his military tactics, his efforts to build up the French colonial system and his desire to convert the Mediterranean into a purely French lake. Whether he took over anything more is a question at once difficult to answer and important, the

solution of which is, as it seems, well-nigh impossible. It is undeniable that Napoleon continued the expansion policy of the Revolution and that he was, generally, acting upon the offensive; likewise it could be shown that he personally liked best of all to be on the field and in battle. But this does not yet explain why he entered, as he did, upon the career of a conqueror. Did he do so on his own impulsion or through the force of circumstances? England's verdict was that the blame lay entirely in Napoleon's infamy, and on the Continent many were of the same opinion; Napoleon, on the other hand, pointed to England as the real disturber of the peace of Europe. Thus the discussion turned back and forth, and the problem is not really settled even at the present time.

If Napoleon was the heir of the Revolution, he was still in another sense its overthrower. He restored the monarchy, ordered anew the administration, gave support to industry, and brought back from their banishment law and religion. As has been noted, he held, in a general way, to the principle of equality; he preferred, however, the soldier to the citizen and naturally saw to it that the important posts in the government were filled with dependable men. Republican simplicity soon disappeared under him; even during the Consulate it began to be a legend. Likewise, republican loquacity now grew silent; it especially displeased the new head of the state and was anyhow of doubtful advantage.

Napoleon's two-fold relation to the Revolution caused Gentz to pass judgment on him quite differently. Immediately after the *Coup d'État*, Gentz believes him to be the man who has subdued anarchy. As early as 1802, however, he becomes uncertain, for he has heard that France in the meantime made new annexations. From about 1803 on, he sees, therefore, in Napoleon little else than the heir of the Revolution, especially of its policy of expansion; the personal position of the new ruler, it is true, he regards, after 1804, as legitimatized. During the war of 1813-14, Gentz's views take a new turn in that after 1813 he emphatically

defends the Napoleonic Empire whose existence was now threatened; for he now sees in it a dam against the desire for expansion of the Eastern powers.

Gentz mentions Napoleon for the first time in a letter of March, 1798, in which he calls him the "blood-dripping" creator of the Italian republics and expresses the hope that this new celebrity may never rise to the position of dictator of France.[1] His next utterances come in the first half of 1799. Napoleon had, in the meantime, sailed to Egypt; what will he accomplish? Gentz awaits in suspense, as does everyone else,[2] further news, but considers the expedition as hazardous.[3] His interest, nevertheless, is aroused; he is convinced that the young general deserves from now on careful watching. And as a matter of fact Napoleon began just then to get attention from every quarter. People began to see in him the coming dictator of France; Wieland expressed this idea publicly as early as March, 1798, and again in January, 1799, while others cherished it in secret. Gentz knows of these hopes, but at present he is not prepared to share them. Even in 1794, it is true, he reckons with the possibility of a dictatorship in France;[4] the idea that the coming dictator is to be a general is, however, against his wishes. Bonaparte's qualities as a statesman, he declares in March, 1799, are overrated; he may begin revolutions readily enough—as the one of 1797 in Upper Italy—but he cannot end them.[5] In August, 1799, Gentz is still prophesying for France "an endless, continuous series of revolutions and catastrophes."[6]

Things were, however, not destined to come to such a pass, for the harvest was ripe and the reaper at hand. Three months after this prophesy there indeed came a new revolution in France, but it was to be the last for a long time: the *Coup d'État*. Gentz expresses himself on it in the

[1] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 252.
[2] *H. J.*, 1799, I, 62, 79.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, 390., note.
[4] Translation of Mallet du Pan, 146, note.
[5] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 253.
[6] *H. J.*, 1799, II, 456.

December number of the *Historisches Journal* for 1799.[7] The tone of his discussion is sympathetic and hopeful. He sees in the *Coup d'État* the first real revolution since 1789, and the transition of the previous form of French government into a dictatorship, which he terms a "provisional" one. He considers it possible that torn and devastated France now will recover; this recovery, he thinks, will, of course, take a long time, but the prospects are good, although Napoleon still has to prove that he possesses statesmanlike qualities.[8] Gentz does not forget to emphasize the fact that Napoleon obtained possession of the government by unjust means; he hopes, therefore, that his dictatorship may form a mere transition to orderly relations, that is to "universal justice, security of person and of property, the reign of law, stability of government."[9] Perhaps he is most satisfied by what he believes to be the honestly pacific intentions of the new ruler; "for the first time," he declares, "since the Republic came into being, the desire for peace seems not to be a trick of war or a cloak for extortion."

But Gentz's hopeful frame of mind was not long to continue. In the summer of 1802, disconcerting news began to arrive from the West; it was heard that Napoleon had been chosen consul for life, that he had annexed Elba and Piedmont and had interfered with the internal affairs of Switzerland. Worse than this was the fact that France laid claim to a controlling influence in the territorial rearrangement of Germany, and even actually exerted it. The dreaded spectre of French ambition was, then, once more, looming up; again the all-absorbing question was: what next? Gentz suddenly awoke from his dreaming, and the mood which is now animating him is shown by two of his letters to Adam Müller from September and October, 1802.[10] Personally he is exceptionally hopeful, for he

[7] *Ibid.*, III, 436-478.
[8] *Ibid.*, 1800, I, 364 ff.
[9] *Ibid.*, 1799, III, 477 f.
[10] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 368 ff., 372.

is just returning from Vienna with the commission of imperial counsellor in his pocket; but as regards the political situation he exhibits grave anxiety. "I am," he writes, "satisfied with fame and honor; I have not learned much that is pleasant or comforting, but much notwithstanding, very much; now I really know how deep the wounds of Europe are, but I know too where the healing herbs are to be found. . . . . I regard myself as one of the instruments whereby Europe is again to be raised to its own. . . . . There can and must be no peace so long as crime goes on unpunished; I would sooner see the world in flames than see it perish in this deadly marasmus." Thus he writes, it is true, only to a friend. Before the public he remains silent, for the time being; as he tells us later, he dared do nothing more than "sigh in silence" at the deeds of Bonaparte.[11] Soon, however, he is to fight once more.

2. 1803-1809.

The new struggle Gentz conducted no longer from Berlin, but from Vienna. For there he had taken up his residence in February, 1803.

He left, if one is to believe his own statements, the scene of his previous activity with a heavy heart; for he could not, as he declares, hope ever again to be so loved, so honored and so considerately treated as he had been there. As a matter of fact, however, he had then played out in Berlin. Until the fall of 1802 he stood, nominally, still in the service of the Prussian state; but after 1800 he was only occasionally occupied, and filled his time with literary work, with trips to watering-places, complaints at his lack of prospects, and wild dissipation.[12] He had grown thoroughly disgusted with the tedious bureaucratic routine, and also with the insignificance of his own position; besides, there were unpleasant domestic scenes, ever increasing debts, a somewhat shattered personal reputation, and the difficulties which the Prussian government now put in the

[11] Weick, IV, 130, note.

[12] *Festschrift zu G. Schmoller's 70, Geburtstag*, 155.

way of his activity as a publicist. In this manner, things could not go on any longer, that he, himself, saw clearly; something, then, had to be done. But what? Gentz thought of moving to Vienna, and offered his services there, as he himself later tells,[13] in the summer of 1802, apparently in August. He had become acquainted with Counts Stadion and Metternich, the imperial representatives at Berlin and Dresden, and thanks to their recommendations, to the support of the imperial counsellor Fassbender and, above all, the intercession of Count Cobenzl, he succeeded in September, 1802, in entering the Austrian service.

It is not uninteresting to study the intentions and expectations entertained on both sides. On the part of Gentz, hope was as indefinite as it was boundless. While returning from Vienna, he informed Adam Müller of his prospects, and enumerated the alleged main points of the contract: an income of 6000 florins, a pension of 4000 florins, a patent of nobility and the grant of other titles as soon as he should manifest his desire for such honors, free choice of occupation, and deliverance from all "slavish" bureaucratic work; he has, therefore, as he adds, "even opportunity for unlimited activities and prospects such as would satisfy the wildest ambition."[14] The liberation from bureaucratic work he also mentions in a letter to Brinckmann of 1803;[15] in his letter of resignation to the king of Prussia he remarks that only the one condition had been imposed upon him, to move there and to continue his literary work.[16] Information that is considerably different, however, and without doubt more correct, we get in turning to the Austrian side.[17] The man who was pushing Gentz's appointment there more than any other and finally carried it through, was Ludwig Cobenzl, the actual head of the Austrian foreign office. Cobenzl had for some time been

[13]"*Tagebücher*," I, 22.

[14]*Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 369.

[15]*Ibid.*, II, 128.

[16]Schlesier, V, 17 f.

[17]Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 191 ff.

convinced that, in the future, Austria's politics must be more energetically championed before the public, and now believed that he had found in Gentz the right man for this task. His plan was to get the latter away from Prussia, and to tie him to Austria. There he was, at first, to be busied with smaller tasks, until he had shown himself acclimated and fully reliable. After that, he might be taken over into the *Staatskanzlei* as a regular official and his pen made use of on a larger scale; he was, however, to remain under the directions of the two heads of the foreign office. In accordance with this plan, the contract was shaped; its chief points were: 1. Gentz was, without being appointed as a regular official, to receive 4000 florins a year and the title of imperial counsellor; 2. his duty was "to devote all his powers for the best interest of the imperial service, according to the commissions and directions given him, and with the most faithful and obedient devotion." To this Cobenzl added orally that he intended to be a stern chief and hoped he would have to experience no disappointment. Gentz, as Cobenzl states, accepted the conditions with the keenest pleasure and promised to undertake nothing whatsoever without the authorization of those in power.

Gentz had hardly arrived in Vienna when he began to throw himself into the whirlpool of society.[18] The first fortnight formed "a continual round from dinner to supper, from coterie to coterie"; of business he did not even think: it was, as he declared, not to hinder him "from being as free, as merry, as wicked, as oratorical, and as poetical as we may wish to be." There was no lack of night birds of his own type in Vienna, and one of those with whom he turned night into day was none other than Stadion. Did he find the new surroundings more attractive than the old? As it seems, he could not yet become quite clear on this point. The women, he states, are very charming, and the air of Vienna in general is possessed of a narcotic charm; on the other hand, in most of the large houses an exceeding emptiness and monotony may be found. Everything is

[18] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* II, 108 f., 111 f., 126 f., 140.

divided into coteries with no points of reunion existing; one must, therefore, choose his circle. He himself, is moving in those of the Countess Kinsky, of the Princesses Lichnowsky and Gallitzin and of Prince Lobkowitz; in all he has more than a half dozen of them, Stadion, however, perhaps twenty. In the circles here mentioned are not included those of the foreign embassies; in these, too, Gentz was in part, a frequent guest: he visited particularly the houses of the Russian ambassador, Count Rasumowsky, and those of the representatives of England and Sweden, Paget and Armfeldt. His feelings represented a mixture of immense satisfaction and growing displeasure. "I am honoured, feted and caressed," he writes in April, 1803, "on all sides"; but he adds: "my real activity, however, can only begin when certain changes have been effected which may perhaps be nearer than many think." The spirit of the time, as he sees it, too, is causing him distress; the human race, he remarks with bitterness in the summer of 1803, is just good enough to be drowned in a general flood.[19]

Gentz then wished for a new, a real activity. What was it to be? At first, he expected, probably, only a share in the decisions concerning questions of foreign policy, later however, apparently even the position of minister of state itself;[20] in addition, he intended, of course, to fight Napoleon, the "monster".[21] He hoped and waited, but nothing seemed to result. He turned to Cobenzl, only to receive the answer that the time for his employment had not yet arrived.[22] So he determined to open the fight against Napoleon in a different way and upon his own responsibility; with Cobenzl he might settle later on, when a fitting opportunity should offer itself.

Before taking up the details of this struggle, it may be best to get at an understanding of its general character.

The fact that Gentz hated Napoleon from 1803 on is not to be explained by a dependence on his part upon the

[19] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 128, 147 f.

[20] *Ibid.*, II, 128.

[21] *Ibid.*, II, 144.

[22] *Aus der alten Registratur der Staatskanzlei*, ed. by Klinkowström, 7.

judgment of public opinion, for at this time Napoleon was by no means generally unpopular. The tremendous hatred which Europe later conceived for him accumulated but gradually; in England since 1803, in Austria since 1805, in Prussia practically since 1806 and in Spain since 1808. During the first years of the Consulate, Napoleon was on the whole respected and admired; at any rate his rule was hailed with satisfaction. In the short interim between the peace of Amiens and the renewal of hostilities with England, he even enjoyed the distinction of being an idol of English society; whoever in those days might take a pleasure trip to Paris wanted to see the First Consul. On the occasion of his journey to the Rhine country in 1804, the emperor was received with unfeigned admiration, and in the states of the later Confederation of the Rhine, this feeling persisted even much longer. In Prussia, public opinion was up to 1805 not only in sympathy with the neutrality policy of the government, but even favorably disposed towards France and towards the emperor himself; according to Johannes von Müller, it did not turn decidedly against the latter until the middle of October, 1805.[23] Napoleon had, up to this time, in a certain sense wooed Prussia and was, even after 1805, somewhat underrated by the Prussian generals.

This hatred must, therefore, be explained differently. Perhaps, then, by a tendency in Gentz towards opposition at any cost, or by the unrest which the policy of Napoleon aroused in him? It is not improbable that both of these factors, to a certain degree, did influence Gentz. To fight—only with the pen and with words, but by no means with the sword—was indeed a kind of necessity for him; he felt it as a pleasant stimulant, provided the excitement was not too great, and thought, after Leipzig that, with the triumph of the good cause, life had become somewhat tedious.[24] Likewise there can be no question that for him the calm enjoyment of life was much disturbed by the continual war-

[23]Schlesier, IV, 119.

[24]*Ibid*, I, 169.

fare and its consequences; he had twice to flee from Vienna, he wandered about the world from the end of 1805 to the spring of 1809 and could, thanks to his anti-Napoleonic tendencies, get no official recognition until the latter year. On one occasion he himself speaks, half in jest, half seriously, on this latter point. It was in the summer of 1811. He would have liked very much to go to Teplitz in order to take care of his body, and incidentally to renew the charming acquaintances which he had made there in the preceding year; unfortunately, however, he has to remain in Vienna. With 4-5000 florins, so he estimates to his friend Rahel, he could have managed to stay there "a few weeks"; but he does not happen to have this sum just then. "God," he exclaims, "and his destroying angel, Bonaparte, are upon us . . . Not to be able to talk with you for a few days and not to see the face of the Princess Solms, those are privations in return from which I could wish the founder of the continental system a hell of his own."[25] Similar feelings may have been entertained by Gentz also at other times. However, it would show a slight understanding of his character to assume that he allowed himself to be seriously influenced by such motives; they can, at all events, not have induced him to take up the fight, inasmuch as they arose only during it.

The real cause of Gentz's antagonism to Napoleon lay far deeper: it lay, in the last analysis, in the entire trend of his political thinking. Napoleon was to him, from 1803 on, but the heir of the Revolution,[26] and the Revolution he thoroughly abhorred. It is true, he thought to distinguish differences between the internal policies of the Revolution and of Napoleon, but these did not, in his eyes signify any advance; in 1805, for instance, he suggests that quiet was then reigning in France, but this quiet was, after all, nothing but the silence of general servitude and an unlimited power of government.[27] In the sphere of interna-

[25] *Ibid.*, I, 121 f.

[26] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 4 ff., 56. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 251.

[27] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 87.

tional politics, Gentz feared even worse from Napoleon than what the Revolution had brought. As early as the summer of 1803, he considered the former the storm-cloud which hung threateningly over Europe, the common danger of the Continent, from which no state felt safe any longer.[28] At any moment, the new Caesar might set his legions in motion and inflict a blow in which more than a third of the Continent would participate; who could think of resisting such a power? The fine old balance of power was, as it seemed, definitely destroyed. Worse things, it is true, were yet to come, and then it was Gentz's controlling idea to prevent, at any cost, the erection of a universal French monarchy in Europe.

But how was this to be prevented? Gentz answers: by coalitions. Any other means he does not know. He especially favors a coalition between Austria and Prussia, and to bring this alliance about was the real goal of his fiery activity during the years 1803-1809.[29] At first, he does not yet think seriously of war; he simply intends to intimidate Napoleon through this coalition or others, and even in October, 1805, he is convinced that France will yield before an Austro-Prussian demonstration. That he could entertain such illusions is in reality not so strange as it may at first seem. Miscalculations of this kind are being made again and again; in 1778 and in 1785, Joseph II operated in the same way against Frederick the Great and lost the game. Only later, from about 1806 on, Gentz also saw in coalitions an effective instrument of war.

Perhaps the best insight into the motives and aims of Gentz's struggle against Napoleon may be obtained from the following passage in a letter of December, 1804: "As regards public affairs," Gentz writes, "but one idea now occupies my attention. There must be effected a union between Austria and Prussia; and I claim it will come. For two months I have been working for this day and night, in

[28] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 114. Cf. p. 128.

[29] Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 251 ff. Schlesier, IV, 16, 86, ff., 100, 117. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 251. 259.

public and in private, with pen and tongue. You shall soon get to see something on that subject. If I can say to myself that I have contributed something to this measure, then I shall consider my goal as attained and my life as well-nigh closed. To resist the French Revolution was my first and holiest purpose: it has been victorious, has been completed—even crowned; that is finished. To prevent the fall of Europe's independence in consequence of that awful revolution—is my present and, of course, my last purpose. The union between Austria and Prussia, accompanied by a general consolidation of all the remaining forces of Germany—this highest German and at the same time European project—is the only means to attain that end; it is, however, also a sufficient, a complete and a thorough one. If Germany shall become united . . . then we can say farewell to Russia (with which for a thousand good reasons I now will have nothing more to do), can see England fighting its glorious fight on a sure and grand basis, and can laugh at all the threats of France. To subdue haughty, terrible, mad, impious, detestable and despicable France by a measure, . . . through which alone Germany . . . can again become Germany, and to find the means for our salvation in the very thing which can at the same time give us the foundation for our future national greatness—what German may resist so ravishing and charming a prospect as this!"[30]

Gentz's attitude towards Russia was, almost from the beginning, one of mingled feelings.[31] To him, Russia was the colossus of the North, the natural rival of Austria in the East and her possible friend in the West, a backward but eventually dangerous power which needed only to extend her hand toward France to share with her the mastery of the Continent and throttle Austria. An alliance with such a power he regarded, in general, as a necessity for Austria, at least until about 1809. That both powers, if

[30] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 251.

[31] Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 256 f., 260 ff. Schlesier, IV, 88 f., 103, 157. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 196 f., 208 f., 231, 259, 262. Cf. p. 121.

allied, would be able to offer successful resistance to Napoleon he did not really believe, at least not after September, 1804; for this, he considered the assistance of Prussia as indispensable. But the alliance would, at any rate, mean a positive strengthening of Austria's power, and then —that he emphasizes in 1804 and again in 1814—a possible union of Russia and France had by all means to be prevented. His estimate of the military value of the Russians was, as regarded a campaign in the West, not a high one; and scarcely higher was his opinion of their diplomatic ability. "We know the Russian geniuses," he writes in June, 1804: all of the average type, or beneath it, generals as well as ministers, with the exception of one man, who is now, however, out of office. At other times, indeed, immediately before Austerlitz, for example, he values the Russians more highly. What especially aroused him was Russia's attitude towards Germany. Already the Russian interference in German affairs during 1801-1803 had displeased him greatly; he became highly indignant, however, at the conceit which the Russian generals, in the campaign of 1805, displayed toward the Austrians. After Leipzig, when the subjugation of Napoleon seemed accomplished, he regarded the Russian colossus hardly as anything less than as the rival of today and the enemy of tomorrow. As if to heap coals of fire upon his head, Emperor Alexander, who apparently knew little of these hostile feelings of Gentz, bestowed upon him, at the end of 1813, the order of St. Anne, calling him at the same time in an autograph, "the champion of law, the defender of the true principles of political wisdom and the art of government."

Gentz kept up relations with England until the time of Napoleon's fall, though not always with the same degree of intimacy.[32] In the first years of his residence at Vienna he acted, as we know, in the capacity of an English agent, being reimbursed for his services by occasional remittances. After 1809, however, he ceased to act as such in any real

[32] *Tagebücher*, I, 40, 52 f., 214, 255 f.

sense of the word, and after 1811, the flow of English guineas also seems to have stopped; his value as an agent depended naturally upon his connections and his knowledge of diplomatic secrets, and as early as 1805 he believed to have discovered that in this regard he was now less highly thought of in London than formerly. But in whatever way Gentz's personal wire to London might work, whatever he might think of English ministries and English policies, to England itself he remained faithfully attached during all these years.[33] The policy of the Addington ministry disturbed him for a moment, but after that he no longer doubted that Britain would stand to the end in the service of the good cause. At times it would even seem as though the fate of England lay closer to his heart than that of Austria or Prussia; when Napoleon was thinking of invading the British Isles, he fairly "trembled," as he says himself, for their future. And this devotion lasted, as we know, even beyond the days of Napoleon; it was so strong that Gentz never entertained the idea that after the elimination of the French supremacy, the English control of the seas would necessarily be only the more uncontested.

The methods which Gentz himself used to reach his political aims were practically the old ones of Berlin: memorials, letters, verbal conversations and publications. The lines of division may here sometimes be hard to determine; in general, however, they are distinguishable, and if we draw these lines, we find in the years from 1803 until 1815 somewhat less than thirty memorials from Gentz's pen: five in 1803, three in 1804, three in 1805, two in 1806, two in 1807, one in 1808, one in 1808-1809, two in 1810, one in 1813, three in 1814 and five in 1815. the two war-manifestos, the treatises on the Austrian finances, and those on maritime law are not included in this list. About half of these memorials were directed to Viennese personages, namely three to Cobenzl, one to Archduke John, two to Stadion and seven to Metternich; five were in-

[33] Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 264 ff. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 130, 144, 161, 171 f., 251.

tended for London, one for Berlin, and one for St. Petersburg. The correspondence carried on by Gentz during this period was of unusual extent. He himself gives the number of his "more important" letters written between 1803 and 1807 as over two thousand, and mentions among them letters to the emperors of Germany and of Russia, the king of Sweden, the queen of Prussia, Archduke John, the duke of Weimar, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, the later Louis XVIII of France, the duke of Orleans and the Prince of Wales; also letters to many English statesmen, to the Prussians Hardenberg, Haugwitz and Boyen, to the Russian Panin, to the Swedes Armfeldt and Brinckmann, and lastly to Johannes von Müller, Rahel, Goethe and Schiller.[34] A considerable number of these letters, however, were of no political import. Of those belonging to the following years, letters to Baron Stein, Nesselrode, and Pozzo di Borgo, to a number of Austrian generals, to Madame de Staël and Friedrich Schlegel deserve to be mentioned.[35] Gentz made, however, now no longer so strong attempts to influence public opinion as he had done formerly: the last of his publications—if we except the two war-manifestos—fall into the years 1806 and 1807, the most important of which were the *Fragmente*. In a certain sense, it is true, Gentz addressed himself to larger circles also in his occasional pamphlets on the financial condition of Austria, and indirectly through the channels of the *Österreichischer Beobachter;* the last named paper stood, at times, under his direct surveillance. Nevertheless, in general he remained silent in this regard after 1807, being convinced that politics were made by the cabinets, and that the general public was but a sluggish, spiritless, and rather stupid mass, not to be influenced by books.[36] Perhaps, he was, in addition, officially warned after the conclusion of peace in 1809 against open attacks on Napoleon.[37] To

[34]Schlesier, V, 29 f.
[35]*Ibid.*, V, 30.
[36]*Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 147; I, 280.
[37]*Ibid.*, I, 341.

arouse the high society in Vienna and elsewhere, Gentz endeavored with unwearying zeal, at least until 1809, believing, as he writes to Johannes von Müller in 1804, that he was helping thereby the good cause not a little.[38]

To these old methods there was added, however, a new one: political intriguing, the overthrow of ministries, or at least attempts in this direction. It is true, Gentz employed this new method almost exclusively against that ministry which he found in power at Vienna upon his arrival there, and within it against Cobenzl in particular.[39]

What was to follow when the struggle against Napoleon should have been ended successfully, may be derived from the preceding chapter on Gentz's political theories, from the citation just made, from the letter to Metternich of November, 1813, and, finally, from the letters to Johannes von Müller.[40] Gentz demands—and these are the ultimate ends towards which he is working—a return to the balance of power; the formation of a new federative system in Europe which would offer a guarantee of independence to the individual states; a territorial reduction of France; the liberation of Germany from every foreign tutelage; a numerical reduction of the German states and the consolidation of those remaining into a federation in which Austria and Prussia should have the leadership, and Austria again should enjoy a certain preponderance over Prussia as the *primus inter pares;* finally, the suppression of all revolutionary tendencies by the European areopagus, the maintenance of the foundations of state and society, and a measured progress in minor points.

If we turn to Gentz's judgment of the man Napoleon, we must above all keep in mind that this judgment was considerably influenced by the former's general relations to the latter. Any subtle distinction between the politician and the man, Gentz was never prone to draw, although

[38]Schlesier, IV, 15.

[39]Cf. p.

[40]Schlesier, IV, 19, 21, 48, 157, 167, 179. Cf. p. 147 f.

claiming himself to have drawn it in his dealings with Cobenzl;[41] besides, in the present case, he materially changed his views as soon as the enemy had become harmless. In general, Napoleon was in his eyes an undoubtedly extraordinary figure who combined every conceivable wickedness with unusual ability. The epithets which Gentz applies to this man between 1803 and 1806 are as long as they are dreadful. He calls him immensely ambitious, haughty, passionate, extremely provoking, a "faithless, vain, petty usurper, by the infamy of contemporaries raised first to greatness, then to a frenzy of greatness, an insolent, impious and villainous tyrant," a "stage monarch," a "blood-reeking beast," and "idol," "Baal," "Belzebub," and so-on.[42] He is especially aroused by Napoleon's bold assumption of the dignity of emperor.[43] How could a man coming from a "branded" family, a "parvenu," like him, think of taking to himself such a hallowed title! How could the princes of Europe submit to this "boundless infamy," how could God in heaven suffer it, even with his incomprehensible patience! It was too much; "can you find words," he asks Brinckmann, "to express this latest of all pieces of villainy?" More moderate in form, more detailed and interesting, are Gentz's characterizations of Napoleon in his letters to Metternich of 1813 and 1814.[44] In August, 1813, he writes in his plastic style concerning the war: "It is the struggle with a raging monster, which before it falls, lays waste the earth about it, but it is none the less its death-struggle, and it can not escape its fate." Then in November, 1813: "The boldest hazard of my life, my obstinate assertion of the personal mediocrity of the ex-hero of our time is now crowned with a success that I myself never looked for. That he was as I said, God indeed revealed to me, and I should have

[41] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 249.

[42] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 8, 9, 11, 45, 66. Schlesier, IV, 54, 86, 118. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 291; II, 135, 144, 194.

[43] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 194, 212.

[44] Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 50 f., 97 f., 291.

died with that conviction, even though he had conquered Asia. But that the whole world should so soon see it, comprehend and acknowledge it, I never promised myself. His soul was long ago comprehensible enough to me, his intelligence much later, and then only with great restriction; but his character still defies me. That there is a tremendous difference between an iron character and a great one did not commend itself to me either. At last everything is becoming clear." Finally, in March, 1814: "This man has his whole life long done nothing but play a great military play with the French, with all Europe, with himself and his own fate. He remained the same at the summit of fortune and on the verge of destruction. His language is not that of a Nero, nor yet that of a Caesar. The strange phenomenon which we call Bonaparte can be measured only by its own standard. The consequence of all the great mistakes, and therefore of all the great suffering of our time, was that Napoleon was ever considered either a demigod or a monster, or perhaps as both in one."

The last of these quotations sounds already less hostile, and a year later, by the end of July, 1815, Gentz had reached a complete change in his judgment. If he now expresses himself about Napoleon almost sympathetically, and certainly with unfeigned emotion, it was not only because he had just then received from Adam Müller a dramatic and inspiring description of the battle of Waterloo which did justice to the Emperor:[45] there were other motives just as strong. The struggle was now over and the career of the opponent definitely closed; thus Gentz was able to view him in a more objective and historic way, and by the tribute that he now pays to Napoleon he proved that he united, after all, with his Phæacian inclinations a deeply rooted appreciation of heroism. In this tribute he first makes acknowledgment of Napoleon's attitude on the *Bellerophon*, and then goes on to say: "It is certain that his character never changed for an instant, and that he has borne this last catastrophe with unaltered equanimity. The

[45] *Ibid.*, 641 ff. Gentz describes the battle himself.

fear of death can never have befallen a man who in the most fearful danger ever showed an iron courage, and even on the day of the battle of Waterloo so exposed his person that no English or Prussian corps could be named which has not seen him at least twenty times on that day in the heaviest fire and turmoil. If he preferred imprisonment to death, he made his choice with forethought; and it can be said that from the beginning to the end of his career he has thrown his contemporaries one after another, now into astonishment and now into rage, that he has outwitted them, despised, scorned and bluffed them; a riddle without an answer, a phenomenon without a parallel, an inexhaustible subject for conjecture, investigation and the despair of historians who in the future will desire to give a faithful picture of him to the posterity which is to judge him."[46]

After this general orientation, we take up the thread of our narrative once more.

Gentz has, as we know, established himself in Vienna and opened his private warfare against Napoleon. For some time, no important happenings are to be noted in his life; but there occurred a considerable number of minor events, and to these—covering the period from the spring of 1803 to the summer of 1805—we have now to turn our attention.

Gentz is of course very busy during this time, for when not busy he becomes bored. He meets many prominent personages, such as Fassbender, Stadion, Metternich, Mack, Paget, Panin, Rasumowsky, Pozzo di Borgo and Armfeldt; with Cobenzl he has but little to do. Soon he rents a country house in Hietzing, one of the suburbs of Vienna, and there he gives tea-parties, or he makes short expeditions into the mountains. Now and then he might also permit himself the pleasure of a love adventure; it goes without saying that he continues to frequent the drawing-rooms of the fashionable world. In general he feels in good spirits.[47] During the second half of 1804, he begins, it is true, to be

[46] *Ibid.*, 686.

[47] *Tagebücher*, I, 30, 33.

discontented with conditions in Vienna;[48] at times a feeling of disgust with the whole world comes over him, and once when in such a mood he tells Brinckmann that he is ready to fight to the end, but that if it comes to the worst, he will bury himself in solitude of the mountains.[49] Still, though he suffers all these moments of depression, Gentz continues to maintain his old self-reliance. In October, 1804, he writes to Brinckmann: "I can assure you without boasting that I have not gone astray for many a day in a single political calculation."[50] Likewise in December, 1804: "I am highly esteemed by all parties and people in Vienna, am loved by many feared by some. . . . The archdukes are not more firmly established, not less exposed to any unpleasantness of even to a *consilio abeundi* than I."[51] Once he makes the laudable attempt to pay off, in part, his debts; unfortunately, the money is embezzled.[52] How he maintained financially his very luxurious mode of life, we do not know in detail; part of the money came, at any rate, from the coffers of the foreign office at London.

Gentz's correspondence was in this period, until the beginning of 1806, a very extensive one, especially lively with Brinckmann, with Johannes von Müller and, first of all, with London.[53] Five memorials fall in the year of 1803: one was addressed to the duke of Weimar and entrusted to Johannes von Müller for delivery, one dealt with the French financial administration, two with the probability of a continental war in event of hostilities between France and England, and one with England's problems in the war which has just broken out.[54] The exact contents of these memorials are but little known, for so far they have not been found, and Gentz himself speaks of them only in

[48] *Ibid.*, I, 37.

[49] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 225.

[50] *Ibid.*, II, 231.

[51] *Ibid.*, II, 248.

[52] *Tagebücher*, I, 29 f.

[53] *Tagebücher*, I, 27.

[54] Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Friedrich Gentz*, I, 174, f. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*. II, 130, 159 f.

passing. To the duke of Weimar, he explains the expediency of working once more toward a union of the German princes, which would now, however, have to be directed against France and include Austria as well as Prussia. In the memoir on England's duties—it was meant for London, but did not actually go there, though it came to the attention of the king of Sweden[55]—he gives the advice to start a revolt within the cabinets in the interest of the European balance of power, or to conquer all possessions of the non-European powers outside of Europe, especially those of Spain in America.[56] This last idea Gentz touches upon again in 1806;[57] the problem of the balance of power hypnotized him apparently to the extent that he was ready to sanction almost anything that promised help. Further memorials appeared in the years 1804 and 1805; these, however, will be analyzed later.[58]

Outside of Austria, Gentz kept up connections with leading personages on the Thames, Spree and Neva. Whether he ever seriously shared in the intrigues against the Russian minister of foreign affairs, may be left undecided; a change in St. Petersburg would, however, undoubtedly have pleased him.[59] At Berlin he possessed in Johannes von Müller and, in a certain sense, also in Brinckmann, active fellow-champions of his ideas; the Prussian war-party, too, was working in harmony with his aims, and at its head stood that Prince Louis Ferdinand with whom he had been so well acquainted since the end of his Berlin period. Especially lively were Gentz's relations with London. Stacks of letters and memorials were sent thither through various channels, and at the same time Gentz enjoyed confidential relations with Paget, the English representative at Vienna. What information he gave the British statesmen, and what measures he advised, we know only in part. As long as Addington was in power, his main con-

[55] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* II, 159 f.
[56] *Ibid.,* II, 162.
[57] *Aus dem Nachlasse,* II, 10 f.
[58] Cf. p. 112 ff.
[59] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz.* II, 231. *Preuss. Jahrb.,* CX, 476.

cern was a fear that England might give in; and he therefore sends repeated warnings to hold out. Malta, above everything else, should not be given up at any price.[60] He is happy at the assumption of government by Pitt in May, 1804, and immediately his notes, letters, and memorials begin to pour in. First he presents to the new premier his memoir against a recognition of Napoleon's imperial title;[61] at the same time or a little later he must, as we learn from a letter to Johannes von Müller of November, 1805, have warned Pitt not to overestimate Russia and to remember that a war against Napoleon at the side of the ministry Cobenzl and without the voluntary aid of Prussia would be hopeless.[62] Almost identical warnings were sent by Paget, but Pitt went his own way.[63] In November, 1804, Gentz presented another memorial, this time to the Earl of Harrowby, Pitt's secretary of foreign affairs, in which he recommended an *entente* between Prussia and Austria.[64]

If we turn to Gentz's activity as regards Austria itself, immediately and above all we hit upon his relations to his immediate superior. We know that Cobenzl at first simply intended to attach Gentz to Austria, and to make serious use of his abilities only later. This time had not yet come by the end of 1803, and in fact never came; for until 1809 Gentz was never really employed. That he must have felt this neglect bitterly is self-evident, and a part of his hostility against Cobenzl undoubtedly went back to this fact. Far more important, however, was that he considered the latter as being perhaps the chief obstacle to a successful fight against Napoleon, and how this came about will now have to be considered.

When Gentz entered the Austrian service, the government lay in the hands of a ministry composed of three departments: the departments of foreign affairs, the interior

[60] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 126.
[61] *Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 475.
[62] Schlesier, IV, 159 f.
[63] *Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 473, 476.
[64] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. Gentz*, II, 245.

and war. At the head of the foreign office stood Counts Colleredo and Cobenzl, the former as its nominal, the later as its real head; one of the counsellors working under them was Collenbach. The head of the department of the interior was Count Kollowrat, who had also supervision over the financial administration. Finally, the head of the war department was Archduke Charles, a brother of Emperor Francis and the victor of 1796; next to him in position and influence were General Duka and Counsellor Fassbender. The competence of these departments seems to have been disputed, and a real cooperation between them never existed; two were even really hostile to one another. The war department, including Archduke Charles, considered Austria as too weak, both in a military and financial way, to carry on successful war with Napoleon even with Russia's aid, and sought, therefore, friendly relations with France. The foreign office, on the other hand, though also convinced of the weakness of the monarchy and not principally in favor of war, did not consider a war if fought in union with Russia, as entirely hopeless. The Emperor sided at first chiefly with the peace party. Since the peace of Amiens, the real opposition to Archduke Charles and his group was formed of a number of persons of high rank and social standing who passed under the name of the "Anglomaniacs"; among them were men such as Panin, Rasumowsky, Paget, Armfeldt, and Pozzo di Borgo, the ladies of the aristocracy, French emigrants and others. The program of this party was the coalition of Europe against Napoleon.

Cobenzl had been entrusted with the conduct of foreign affairs in October, 1800, but did not actually enter upon his duties until September, 1801. He possessed considerable diplomatic experience, being especially well acquainted with the conditions in St. Petersburg, where for twenty years he had been the representative of the court of Vienna, and the advocate of an Austro-Russian alliance. As the *protegé* and pupil of Kaunitz, as a former confidant of Joseph II, and on account of his long diplomatic career, he really belonged to that earlier period of Austrian

diplomacy in which the antagonism to Prussia had formed the leading idea of the Austrian cabinet. In St. Petersburg he had acted as an enemy of Prussia, and it was now to be seen whether he would retain his old policies in the new position. Times had changed, it is true; the European situation was now of a different character, and Cobenzl himself did not enjoy the same measure of respect and confidence from the now reigning emperor as from his predecessor.

The task which lay before the new chief of the Austrian foreign office was an unusually difficult one. On three sides, the Austrian monarchy bordered on great states: in the north and east on Russia, in the east on Turkey, in the north on Prussia, and in the south, in Italy, on the outposts of France; on three sides, then, it was exposed to dangerous attacks. Prussia, it should be said, was in an equally exposed position; she had, however, lived in peace with France since 1795 and was at this time even courted by this power. Russia was geographically protected and could easily come to an understanding with France. Austria's position could, then, not be termed enviable: all around her only rivals and elements of possible conflicts and nowhere a friend unless it were across the sea. To the west, the danger was probably as great as ever; Napoleon, it is true, still held back and besides, his death or a new revolution might completely change the situation there. Not less serious were the dangers which threatened from Russia and Prussia. Although a direct attack on the monarchy itself did not seem probable, or at least not imminent from this side, yet attempts at new territorial annexations would in this case, if once completed, in all probability be of a permanent character. If there was any way out of this dangerous isolation, it had to be sought in an alliance with one or several of the great powers, and then the choice practically lay between France and the late Coalition. The natural course was to seek a union with the latter; it was necessary, however, in striving for it to proceed with the utmost caution. France must not be aroused, at least not before everything

was in readiness for a conflict; for if it came to war, the first blow would fall upon Austria. In order to meet it in time, hostilities must not begin until the Russian forces were near enough and the very important question of English subsidies had been settled. We shall see that the policy of the Austrian minister held almost exactly to this line of reasoning.[65]

Cobenzl came to Vienna with the conviction that Austria's salvation lay in an alliance with Russia, and immediately made overtures in this direction to the Russian ambassador, Count Mnrawief; his object was not to bring on war, but to prevent a further expansion of France. The sounding had no results. In the beginning of 1803, Cobenzl made a second attempt to approach Russia, sending even an archduke to St. Petersburg; this move was also without results. A fundamental change in Russian politics was, however, at hand. Russia's relations with France had in the meantime cooled considerably, and new connections were now desirable; since Prussia intimated a desire to maintain her neutrality, the Czar suggested at Vienna in the autumn of 1803, that the time might have arrived to consider a union of the two imperial courts for the protection of their mutual interests against the robber republic. Cobenzl was pleased at this readiness to come to an understanding; nevertheless, he took up the suggestion only with the greatest caution and did not, for the time being, allow himself to be moved to any decisive step. What considerations guided him here can best be seen from the instructions of November, 1803, given to the new Austrian ambassador at Berlin, Count Metternich.[66] The late extension of French influence over Switzerland, Holland and Parma, Cobenzl explains, may have the object of strengthening the position of the First Consul in France itself, but it may also form the beginning of a despotic French hegemony in Europe; in the latter case, it is an evil against which there is but one

[65]Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 29 f., 75 ff., 140 ff.
[66]*Ibid.*, 203 ff.

means: the coalition of the powers. England, and finally also Russia, are ready for such a step; Prussia, it is true, can not at present be depended upon. Austrian interests clearly demand a cooperation with Russia, and the only question is how far such joint action shall go and what object it shall have. To give it an offensive character would be inadvisable, since in the event of war, the first attack would be directed against Austria, and Napoleon was always better prepared to fight than either Austria or Russia; besides, the main part of the Russian army would have to be employed in watching Prussia. Thus Cobenzl, although declaring himself for a cooperation with Russia, emphasizes the necessity of great consideration toward France; he was inclined most of all to favor a neutral position and dilatory measures without, however, letting the possibility escape of establishing closer relations with Russia. Caution and the desire to avoid all compromising actions characterize his policy more than anything else, for he has other purposes than to make Austria dependent upon the movements of the Russian cabinet; perhaps, he declares, Bonaparte is after all not so insatiable as England would have him to be, perhaps he may yet be induced to moderation, and then it would be Austria's task to mediate between the powers. As for England, that power, he concludes, must be watched with mistrust; Britain seems to have the dangerous intent of turning the threatened French invasion back upon the Continent, and to this, Russia's atention will have to be called in no uncertain fashion. Cobenzl held to the standpoint outlined in these instructions for the next two months: the negotiations with Russia were continued, but at the same time France received the most considerate treatment. In this way things went on without any essential changes and to the increasing dissatisfaction of Metternich, Stadion, the Vienna war-party and the Czar, until the spring of 1804, when new events forbade the continuance of these dilatory tactics. Napoleon acted as though wishing to annex the Cisalpine Republic to France and to come to an intimate understanding with Bavaria; besides, the

cooling of the relations between Paris and St. Petersburg had now developed into a scarcely concealed breach. Cobenzl realized the impossibility of further temporizing. He made a futile attempt at coming to an understanding with Prussia and then determined—on November 6, 1804—to form a defensive alliance with Russia against France. The die was cast, and immediately Cobenzl showed that his previous hesitations had in no wise been the result of natural indecision; he demanded and obtained the reorganization of the war ministry; Duka was replaced by General Mack, Fassbender removed and Archduke Charles' competency reduced. Eight months later Cobenzl took the last step. In March, 1804, the French ambassador at Vienna officially announced that the acceptance of the crown of Lombardy by Napoleon was imminent, and in June of the same year the Ligurian Republic was incorporated into the French empire. The danger for the Austrian possessions in Upper-Italy had thus become a direct one, and now—July 7, 1805—Emperor Francis decided, on the recommendation of the foreign office, to join the English-Russian alliance. This step meant an abandonment by the Austrian cabinet of its previous defensive attitude, and the effects of the new policy became apparent almost immediately: a few weeks later, the French army that had been standing on the shores of the Channel started towards the Rhine.

All the negotiations referred to above were carried on with the utmost secrecy as they should, for the present, remain a secret, and above all never come to the knowledge of Napoleon; it is even possible that Cobenzl let drop, in addition, certain misleading hints.[67] The plan of secrecy was logically quite correct, except for the fact that it was sure to have very serious attendant results: since no one knew exactly what was happening, many would not even believe that anything at all was in progress, at least not anything good. The war-party became first suspicious, and then aroused, as did Gentz, who in the meantime had risen to the

[67] *Tagebücher,* I, 39.

position of one of its leaders. He knew, as he tells later,[68] extremely little of the negotiations that were being carried on with Russia; but this little satisfied him that Cobenzl plainly had in mind to reject Russia's offer, that he would not trouble himself about Prussia's support, and that he was ready to allow destruction to overtake the state. Such conduct was surely unheard-of, almost high treason in fact, and the good of the country demanded that it be stopped as quickly as possible. Since Cobenzl might still be open to arguments, Gentz proceeded to address a number of memorials to him.[69] Almost at the same time, however, he adopted also other and most extreme measures: he sounded the alarm, denounced the minister in letters,[70] aroused society against him wherever it was not already so disposed or did not belong to the opposite party, and sought to obtain Cobenzl's removal from office, first from the Emperor through Archduke John (autumn of 1804), then from Pitt (autumn of 1804 and end of 1805), and through Czartoryski even from the Czar (end of 1805).[71] Years later he confessed his mistake.[72] He was, as he remarks in his diaries, less and less in touch with Cobenzl and at last not at all so, and had been left by him in "complete and wrongful ignorance" about the negotiations with Russia; Collenbach had even absolutely shunned him. From Fassbender and Archduke John he had heard the little they themselves knew, and further, but entirely misleading, information had come to him through Paget. The really more reliable sources had remained closed to him, and thus he had fallen "from one misconception into another." The justification is lame indeed. In reality Gentz opposed Cobenzl almost from the start with prejudiced mind; he judged him by his

[68] *Ibid.*, I, 39.

[69] Cf. p. 112 ff.

[70] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* II, 173, 194 f., 258. Schlesier, IV, 16, 74 f., 143, 155.

[71] Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl,* 245, 262, 288 ff. *Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 476, 479. Schlesier, IV, 145 f.

[72] *Tagebücher,* I, 39 ff.

St. Petersburg antecedents and would take neither the time nor the trouble to wait and see how Cobenzl would act in his new situation.[73] Waiting was always hard for him, and he was, it must be remembered, a publicist.

Whom Gentz wished to place at the head of the Austrian foreign office is not quite clear. As it seems, he proposed to Pitt in 1805, Prince Trauttmannsdorf, an adherent of the Prussian alliance and a former temporary head of foreign affairs.[74] Incidentally he may have thought also of Archduke Charles, who, however, appealed to him as not at all significant, or, perhaps, of Archduke John.[75] His innermost desires, however, were bent upon quite a different man: Metternich. He had, so he writes to Brinckmann in January, 1805, just explained to Archduke John that as eventual successor to Cobenzl, no one else could be seriously considered; Metternich's youth, he adds, may, however, stand in the way of this plan.[76]

What course of politics Gentz considered in particular as the most advantageous for Austria, can be seen from his memorials and letters written during this time.

The first of these is the *Mémoire sur la nécessité de ne pas reconnaître le titre impérial de Bonaparte*, which was presented to Cobenzl on June 6, 1804.[77] Gentz is of the opinion that Napoleon's recognition, if possible, should be omitted or refused, and this for two reasons: in the first place, because the authority and power of the First Consul would thereby be increased; in the second place, because the Revolution would thus receive European sanction. Up to the present time, he thinks, the rule of Bonaparte could be regarded as a praiseworthy attempt to suppress anarchy, and from this point of view he himself has regarded it until now; but that is no longer possible, since the question of founding a Bonaparte dynasty has arisen. The French

[73] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 128.
[74] *Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 476.
[75] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 258. Schlesier, IV, 59, 75.
[76] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 259 f.
[77] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 1-28.

people, it is true, do not seem to protest against this plan, and Bonaparte himself is seeking above everything else, the approval of public opinion and its leaders; but by this very fact the latter identifies himself with one of the chief principles of the Revolution, that of the sovereignty of the people. Bonaparte is the product as well as the representative of the revolutionary tendencies; to recognize him would, therefore, mean to sanction these. And granted that he were thus recognized, what would be the consequence of such a step? The magic of the supreme power would be destroyed; no throne could be considered safe any longer; a general levelling would probably result, and every future revolution would find its excuse in advance. The best move, Gentz concludes, would thus be to refuse Bonaparte the desired recognition; if, however, this be unavoidable, then let it be given only in concert with other powers, especially with Russia, and only in return for concessions.

The next memorial is addressed to Archduke John; it was delivered to him on September 6, 1804, and was to reach, if possible, the ear of the Emperor himself.[78] In content, it is one of the most valuable and best-written of all the works of Gentz. The ideas brought forth in it are as follows. Even a cursory review of the international situation of Europe shows it to be unsatisfactory and serious. That the Revolution has now definitely come out victorious and in all probability will pursue its ravages even farther, is bad enough; but it is far more serious that the European balance of power has now become a mere fiction. The Continent is unmistakeably trending towards a double universal monarchy: the East will, unless a bar is interposed at the eleventh hour, fall to Russia, the West and South to France, and central Europe to both powers together. In a certain sense these changes, which must be expected from the future, have already taken place. Italy, Switzerland, and all northern and western Germany are already nothing but French dependencies, and the terror of the French name

[78]Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 242-292.

has become the chief and only political impulse of all governments. In addition to this there stands at the head of France's collossal power a sinister, passionate and insatiable man who from all appearances is reaching out for control of Europe. England and Russia have so far maintained their independence; Prussia, however, already awaits with each rising sun its death-sentence. Austria lies at present still outside of the French circle, but its situation is likewise highly precarious. The former buffer-states toward France exist no longer; they have even become tentacles with which the French octopus holds the Habsburg monarchy in its embrace. On all sides, Austria now borders upon avowed or secret enemies; its influence outside of Germany is no longer noticeable, and should there come about that most dangerous of all political combinations, an alliance between France and Russia, then Austria's end would no longer be far off. The danger is therefore great, and the only means to escape it is a change in the entire political system. If Austria does not want to rush straight to its destruction, it must come out from its isolation and that too without delay. In other words, it must form alliances, and an alliance with Prussia would have most to recommend it. The influence of such a move would extend not only to the political situation but also to the spheres of trade, industry, and general culture in both countries; it would also bring about a consolidation of the "Empire", would hold Bonaparte in check and make possible a rehabilitation of the independence of Holland and Switzerland. To bring this alliance to pass presents, it is true, a most difficult political task; nevertheless, an attempt ought to be made. If this should fail, then the time will have arrived to think of different combinations, in the first place of a union with Russia. France is, in this connection, not to be considered, because its power is so colossal that an Austria allied with it would be condemned to play the part of a second. The alliance with England is desirable under any circumstances; it is, however, not absolutely necessary in case Prussia could be won over, and

without Prussia, it is not sufficient. There remains, then, next to the Prussian alliance, as the only effective one, that with Russia: this might prevent war altogether, and would, if war should break out, afford some certain guarantee of success. But it is just this alliance which, in spite of Russia's willingness, is now avoided or at least not sought for by Austria. A ministry which evinces such an absolute lack of wisdom and courage can naturally achieve no results, and it is only to be hoped that it will soon make way for personages who are ready to enter upon a different course. Energy, patriotism, other men and other measures —these are the things which Austria now needs. Only in this way, Gentz concludes, shall we succeed, "in not only lifting ourselves from our present degradation, but in even reaching a glorious height whence we shall be a model for those about us who, too, have fallen, the protectors and avengers of the oppressed and the terror of the oppressors."

The annexation of Genoa by France caused Gentz to send Cobenzl, in June, 1805, a protest against Austria's attitude.[79] France's act, he exclaims, is a violation of the principles of international law; at any rate, it remains invalid until the "corps politique de l'Europe" will have given it its sanction. Why, Gentz asks, was no protest made? There existed no danger of war; Bonaparte does not want any at this time, and would certainly have yielded to pressure.

Gentz's last memorial to Cobenzl was instigated by an article in the *Moniteur* and presented in August, 1805.[80] Gentz had for some time noticed the influence on public opinion exerted by the Napoleonic press and felt great disgust; now his patience was at an end. How could the cabinet of Vienna contemplate such conduct in idleness? Did the fact still remain concealed from it that the French government had for years been tyrannizing public opinion in Europe? Most emphatically, therefore, he urges Cobenzl at last to make a solemn protest against such methods.

[79] *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 59-70.
[80] *Ibid.*, 71-78.

Ideas similar to those of the preceding memorials are to be found in the *Projet d'une déclaration de Louis XVIII contre le titre impérial usurpé par Bonaparte* of 1804 and in the *Lettre à Sa Majesté le Roi de Suède* of 1805;[61] only the second of these writings, however, is of importance. On the whole this is a compliment to the king on account of his attitude towards Napoleon; yet it contains, at the same time, interesting and animated statements of Gentz's views on the old European regime, on the Revolution, on Napoleon's relations to it, and on certain points of international law. Gentz begins with the remark that he is not writing for the general public, for that feelingless, superficial, and frivolous *plebs:* he is addressing rather the very small group of people still standing for "truth, principles, and honor," and among them he counts the king. He then turns to the general situation. We live, so he states, in a time when the old order of things is making way for a new, and it must be assumed that this change was foreseen by Providence. But was the change destined for the present era, and was it to be carried out in the fashion in which it is now being carried out? Gentz believes that both questions are to be answered in the negative. According to him, it was a later period for which all that was intended which is now being realized, and for this reason he declares it to be the duty of all well-meaning people to call a halt on the further destruction of the old order of things. The Revolution has gone far enough; it has completely changed the face of France and will soon reach the ends of the civilized world. All hands, then, to the rescue! Above all, courage and determination to conquer or to die sword in hand! The duty of the rulers will be to lead on the warriors and mutually to support one another: they should promote sensible progress, but must oppose unyieldingly every attempt to overthrow the foundations of society. In this way it may be possible to preserve that which is essential in the glorious old system.

[61] *Ibid.*, 29-40, 79-104.

The effect of these memorials was rather slight. Gentz probably did not himself expect too much from them, if we are to take his own word for it.[82] Cobenzl resented them;[83] Archduke John, on the other hand, accepted them with approval and appears to have defended their ideas before the Emperor.[84] The sketch of a proclamation of the later Louis XVIII, and the letter to the king of Sweden were given wider publicity, as they were copied in foreign newspapers and even circulated in manuscript form,[85] and may have had a certain influence.

We have arrived at the summer of 1805. War has not yet broken out, but is on its way, even though this is not known to everyone. Gentz is in eager expectation and full of wise speculations as to what has to be done. The character of these speculations may be seen from letters to Johannes von Müller.[86]

In July, 1805, Gentz sends to his friend in Berlin a rather pessimistic effusion which contains a *resumé* of the whole political situation. He mourns over the lethargy prevailing at Vienna and expresses the fear that Napoleon may use the Austrian war preparations as a pretext for an attack. After further remarks on the reorganization of the war department and Emperor Francis' aversion to war, he turns to the ministry and in particular to Cobenzl. He is astonished that Austria has not opened negotiations with Russia and that a defensive agreement only has been sought. Again he characterizes an alliance with Prussia as the only way to salvation; Cobenzl puts no importance upon it, and for this reason others must be placed at the helm: "until this ministry is rooted out, no good can come about." Gentz finally throws out the idea of starting with Johannes and Adam Müller "a counter-revolution in the highest sense of the word"; what he understands by this,

[82] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 194 f.

[83] *Tagebücher*, I, 40.

[84] Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 134 f.

[85] Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Friedrich Gentz*, I, 177 f., 192.

[86] Schlesier, IV, 47-118.

indeed we do not hear, and at any rate the idea had no consequence.

By the end of August, all Austria resounded with preparations for war. What will be the outcome? Gentz is not entirely sure, but believes that the intention should be armed mediation. Bonaparte, he declares, wishes war only as long as there is no risk, and for this reason he now avoids it; besides, he is personally no longer the man that he was at the time of the *Coup d'État*. The chances of the coalition in the event of war, Gentz, it is true, does not consider as very favorable: Prussia, he states, has not been won; Russia is without a single capable general or statesman; and Austria possesses generals of second rank only.

By the beginning of September, Gentz is at last convinced that war is inevitable. He admits he has not expected this: "an almost miraculous combination" has caused this change in the situation. He looks for good results from the mission of general Meerveldt to Berlin, but is worried lest the proper instructions have not been given him; he should wish to have it explained to the king of Prussia that he could prevent the war by merely assuming an appearance of friendliness to the Coalition. In order to be sure he therefore gives Meerveldt a memorial conceived in this spirit.[87] On the whole he views the future calmly; "the star of the tyrant is on the wane," he will surely yield. In similiar fashion Gentz expresses himself also in the middle of September. Yet he considers the Russian support as insufficient and asks Johannes von Müller to bethink himself whether there was no way of inducing the king of Prussia to join the coalition; he himself believes much could have been done along this line by personal meetings of the sovereigns, missions of archdukes and direct correspondence.

Early in October, Gentz writes for the last time in a really optimistic tone. The sending of Meerveldt and of Haugwitz to Berlin and Vienna respectively satisfies him.

[87]Schlesier, IV, 100.

Prussia's policy of neutrality is aparently wavering and will soon be abandoned. Napoleon now probably experiences a bad hour, for the "theatrical monarch" has never seen moments such as these; perhaps he may even get a stroke of apoplexy. A capable ministry would have an exceptional opportunity to exploit his embarrassment.

Thus wrote Gentz in the beginning of October, and never was he more sadly mistaken. Napoleon had no thought whatever of allowing himself to be intimidated. By the end of August the army concentrated at Boulogne received orders to march to the Rhine, where the emperor himself would join it. It reached this first goal somewhat earlier than had been expected outside of France; then it wound itself through the passes of the Black Forest and its northern extremity, moved, by forced marches, through the present Baden and Wurtemberg and before the middle of October, reached, in converging lines, the upper Danube. There, at Ulm, fell the first blow; Mack, the hope of the Viennese war-party, had to surrender on October 19 with about 30,000 men. The effect of the capitulation was immediate and great: the road to the heart of Austria now lay open to the French, and within the camp of the enemy doubt and despair had taken up their abode. Napoleon energetically pressed forward, and by the beginning of November he was approaching the gates of Vienna.

Ruin, then, had arrived. It had been the hope this time to overthrow the colossus, and now what a terrible disillusionment—*Hannibal ante portas!* Gentz heard the reports from the seat of war in a sort of daze; he was deeply agitated, almost beside himself, and the victim of the most contradictory emotions. At one time he gives up everything as lost and speaks of flight to Tartary, of imprisonment, even death; then again the elasticity of his temperament seems to assert itself. To friends in Berlin and London he may send hopeful letters asking them not to let their spirits fall, everything may yet turn out favorably;[88] but when he writes in this way he is only trying to draw himself as

[88] *Mittcil. d. Instituts f. Österr. Geschichtsf.*, VII, 124 ff. XXI, 122 ff.

well as others out of despondency. In reality he soon saw the situation in its worst light, and his hatred for the originator of all this misery now knew no bounds. "The ruin of my life," he writes on October 23 to Johannes von Müller, "is for me an evil of such magnitude that everything which now may happen can but slightly affect me. Whether they drive me into Tartary or shut me up in the Temple or shoot me, is all one to me. But that Bonaparte was not beaten, that the Electors were not punished by new shame, not to be victorious—at a moment when all the meaning of life depended on victory not to win—to read in their accursed newspapers the triumphant accounts of these hell-hounds—the rejoicing of their partisans in Germany—that absorbs the mind and leaves no room for any other feeling of pain."[89] Again, in the same way, on November 3: "The misfortune which has come upon us is really of a kind to crush the soul and suspend the powers of thinking . . . What I cannot comprehend is how I ever could have had any hope, . . . If the emperor of Russia is firm he can yet maintain and save us; but if his courage falls in the slightest degree, or if he does not keep enough of it to give us a great deal, then peace is unavoidable or else the downfall of Europe is sealed."[90] Finally on November 8: "In two hours I shall leave Vienna. . . . . You may appreciate the dreadful and heart-rending feelings which lie back of these words. . . . The king of Prussia is now in the truest sense of the word the arbiter of the life and death of Europe. . . . . If he but wavers all is lost, and this time never to be regained. . . . . Since yesterday—but why should I picture it to you? I assure you that my tears choke me when I attempt it. I am keenly convinced that the end of the world has come, and that I shall feel myself going down into my grave as soon as I leave my threshold. Farewell, I can write no more."[91]

As the enemy drew nearer to the capital, it became necessary to think of moving the seat of government farther

[89]Schlesier, IV, 125 f.
[90]*Ibid.*, IV, 128 ff.
[91]*Ibid.*, IV, 136 ff.

east. Toward the end of the first week of November, in a dark and cold night, the court, Cobenzl, and the foreign ambassadors, therefore, left Vienna for Brünn. Gentz accompanied them; but with what feelings did he travel this bitter road! The darkness which lay heavily and uncannily on the fields along the wayside, the noise of the numerous coaches and wagons, the fear of running into the hands of reconnoitering parties of the enemy, finally the piercing consciousness of entering upon a future which would, perhaps, be blacker than the night—all this cut deep and infinitely painful furrows into his already gloomy mind; "the journey to the grave," so he writes a few days later to the faithful Adam Müller, "can not be worse than this for me."[92] Brünn was, however, reached in safety, and on November 17 Gentz proceeded to Troppau in order to await there the further course of events. His mood remained, on the whole, the same. The defeats rested heavily upon him; he was in despair but not utterly so.[93] The Russians, he states, have fought with distinction; 20,000 Austrians are still intact, the armies are now arrayed against one another, and a decisive battle must ensue during the next few days. It is true, he adds: "Bonaparte himself is on the scene." He now stands on a somewhat better footing with Cobenzl, for on September 14 a sort of reconciliation between the two men seems to have taken place;[94] he can, however, not yet forgive him his policy. "Now," he writes, "the importance, the nullity, yet the infamy of this ministry which in other days I designated so often to the various cabinets of Europe as the real source of our common destruction, stands out in all its terrible aspects." Colloredo has been dismissed, to Gentz's great joy, but that does not satisfy him; he would have liked to see Cobenzl removed as well, and hopes for an intervention on the part of the Czar. He still expects Haugwitz's mission to yield important results.

[92] *Briefe zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, 62.

[93] Schlesier, IV, 141 ff.

[94] *Tagebücher*, I, 41.

Napoleon had in the meantime reached Vienna, and after crossing the Danube pushed the greater part of his army forward in a northeasterly direction. On November 30, the two armies stood opposite each other near the little town of Austerlitz in Moravia, and there two days later the famous battle took place which broke the third coalition and sent Pitt to an early grave.

Gentz received the news of the terrible defeat during the night of December 3. How he took it is shown by a note which he apparently wrote the same night, and which, at any rate, he cannot have written much later; the note reads: "Je viens de recevoir à l'instant une éstaffette d'Olmuetz du 10.—accablante, affreuse, déchirante. Tout est perdu, mon cher Comte; nous sommes détruits, anéantis, en plein déroute."[95] Again he had to flee, and this time the route to be taken was hardly less difficult and dangerous than it had been a few weeks before; he went northeast, passed the still somewhat unsafe Sudetes and made his first stop at Breslau, from where he journeyed on the Dresden. His state of mind varied: he is in despair, rouses himself again, collapses once more and ends in resolution as well as apathy. On December 10 he declares proudly: "Everything remains as it was:—I, who am also a power, make no peace, nor any truce, and the worse things go, the more sacred do I feel my duty to be, not to yield."[96] But then hopelessness and relaxation gain the upper hand. On December 14 he writes: "The play is coming to its close, my dear friend, and soon it will be said: *Et nunc, spectatores, plaudite!* . . . . Nothing matters to these dirty rascals. . . . Oh, if they only could have perished, what a pleasure the overthrow of our monarchy would be! But to lose the provinces, honor, Germany, Europe and—the Zichys, the Uquarts, the Cobenzls, the Collenbachs, the Lamberties, the Dietrichsteins and all the rest, to have to keep these, no satisfaction, no revenge, not one of these dogs hanged or quartered—that is beyond en-

[95] Schlesier, IV, 166.

[96] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* I, 290.

durance. . . . . No one can tell whether Bonaparte has not decided to take revenge [on Prussia] for the last two months. . . . . Some evil or other is impending upon northern Germany."[97] Somewhat more quietly does Gentz express himself about his plans on December 16.[98] He thinks it to be unlikely that he will ever return to Vienna, where he would hardly be tolerated any more; as to St. Petersburg, he does not care to go there, partly on account of its climate, partly because next to cold, death and the French he hates nothing so heartily as the Russians. He shows contempt for the Austrians, but has a feeling of sympathy for them as well, and to see them scorned by these Russian "barbarians" is more than he can endure. If everything should go to ruin, he might settle somewhere in the Tyrol or Carinthia, and there live in communion with the plants and the stars; what proconsul or tyrant may rule, shall then not matter to him. At present he is ready to continue the fight along the old lines and meets, early in 1806, Stadion's suggestion that he use more caution with the remark that he can and will not be silent.[99] Pitt's death does not seem to have moved him very greatly; he only casually refers to it and states that the British statesman had, years before the end, passed the zenith of his fame and usefulness.[100]

Gentz stayed in Dresden to the end of June, 1806, and then again from the middle of July to the end of September; the last days of June and the opening days of July he spent in Teplitz, which from then on he loved so much. In the first two weeks of October, we find him at the Prussian army headquarters in Thuringia, whither he went on an invitation from Haugwitz. After a further brief stay in Dresden and Teplitz, he went to Prague and this was to remain his headquarters from then on until February, 1809. On the 18th of this month he received a communication

[97] Schlesier, IV, 153 ff.
[98] *Ibid.*, IV, 166 ff.
[99] *Deutsche Rundschau*, CLII, 273.
[100] *Ibid.*, CLII, 273 f.

from Count Stadion which summoned him to Vienna, and from this time dates his second residence in the capital city of the Austrian monarchy; this residence lasted, with some interruptions, until his death.

The time from the beginning of 1806 to the beginning of 1809 stands out, therefore, as a distinct period, and we must, consequently, treat it as such.

On the whole, Gentz remained, during these three years, his old self with all his virtues and weaknesses: he is ever active and pleasure-seeking, ever hating and loving, scolding and flattering, now ready to fight and full of animal spirits, now again depressed and *blâsé*, but yet always interested in everything that is happening in the world, and in animated contact with a great number of persons distinguished by rank, talent, or beauty. His life was not exactly very well regulated, but pleasant and interesting. At times he experienced lack of money, as for instance in 1806;[101] but in general he seems not to have suffered in this regard, thanks to English assistance which was again afforded him in 1807, and to occasional remittances from St. Petersburg.[102] When he did suffer from lack of money, it did not trouble him very greatly,[103] for he was used to debts and to hand-to-mouth existence. His mode of life was, with the exception of short periods of financial depression, almost as luxurious as it had been at Vienna; at the close of 1808, he even fixed up a house in Prague such as he had "hardly had in his best days in Vienna," and made his trip from Breslau to Dresden in 1806 accompanied by two couriers, a valet, two horses owned by himself and three carriages.[104] The summer months he spent in Teplitz; in the years 1807 and 1808, his stay in this favoured place lasted more than sixteen weeks. He found there everything his many-sided nature desired and needed: the *crême* of Viennese society, a galaxy of charming women of

[101] *Tagebücher*, I, 46, 49.
[102] *Ibid.*, I, 47, 51 f.
[103] *Ibid.*, I, 46, 49.
[104] *Ibid.*, I, 57, 43.

rank and wealth, distinguished visitors from Prussia and the "Empire," an army of haters of Napoleon, a mild climate and the lovely scenery of the entire European landscape. The character of the natives, too, appealed to him. "I cannot describe to you," he assures Adam Müller in the summer of 1807, "how well I have felt since I have been staying in Bohemia. The honesty of the Austrians, their faithfulness and active sympathy with Prussia's misfortune without a single exception, their good wishes for the future, their very positive good-will, their hope and confidence—all this has endeared them to me anew. . . . Long live southern Germany!"[105] At one time, it is true, he was on the point of leaving at the very height of the season and despite all these splendid features, all on account of a dreadful storm; only a solemn oath on the part of his landlord that under the zenith of Teplitz no such natural phenomenon had been observed for a hundred years, was able to turn him from his purpose.[106]

Within this outward life, however, Gentz busied himself restlessly to attain the aim that still was his, first and last: the liberation of Europe from French oppression. His actions and plans in this direction may, again, be learned from his personal and political letters, his publications and his diaries.

Turning to Gentz's personal correspondence we find a number of not uninteresting remarks pertaining to the present and future.[107] At the head stands his hatred for Napoleon; "toward him," so runs one of these remarks, "toward him alone should all our hatred be directed and devoted in the full conviction that nothing stands in the way of the world's peace save his existence alone." Yet, in spite of this, he again feels some confidence in the future, and conjures his friends to persist in the struggle. Austria, it is true, had in the meantime made peace with Napoleon

[105] *Briefw. zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, 117.

[106] *Ibid.*, 101 f.

[107] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 273, 280, 285 f. *Briefw. zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, 106, 118, 152 f.

and could, therefore, at present no longer be considered; but, as to the future, to hope was not impossible, for at the end of December, Cobenzl and Collenbach had at last resigned from office, and now the clever, decisive Stadion stood at the head of the foreign office at Vienna. At any rate, Russia and England were still at war with France; how if the Prussian cabinet and king were now forced to make common cause with them? Gentz had formerly fought this idea most emphatically, when it had proceeded from these two powers;[108] now he himself accepts it for the moment and sees "most decisive scenes enacted in northern Germany": Haugwitz, Lombard, and Lucchesini at the wheel, the country is a *levée en masse* against France and the king forced to resistance, or—Prussia laid at the feet of the tyrant. A fight then to the end, a duel without mercy, and one single purpose: victory or destruction; possibly the latter, but also victory, perhaps, for Gentz has, even now, an instinctive faith, as may be seen from the introduction to his *Fragmente*,[109] that the palm would ultimately fall to him who remained firm and watchful to the end. His immediate object, it is true, now seems to be an acceptable, "reasonable" peace, which would give an opportunity of organizing everything anew and carrying on the struggle later, with better chances of success; in this way, at least, he replies to an inquiry from St. Petersburg sent to him in May, 1806. The Oubril treaty between Russia and France of July, 1806—which, it is true, was not ratified —was a heavy blow to him; he comments upon it in these words: "now everything is over, everything is dead and gone." And in this mood of almost unconditional hopelessness he remains until the beginning of 1809. The most dreadful aspect of the situation, he states in October, 1807, is its "final character" and the absence of all prospects for a reversal. He dares entertain hopes only for the more remote future; as to the present, nothing is to be expected any more from it, not even from Spain. Only at the head

[108] Schlesier, IV, 117, 159.

[109] Cf. p. 128.

of a few hundred thousand men could one speak to Napoleon a word that would carry weight, but this *ultima ratio* of all negotiations with him—where is it?

Gentz published during these years the following three works: *Fragmente aus der neuesten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa; Authentische Darstellung des Verhältnisses zwischen England und Spanien vor und bei dem Ausbruche des Kriegs zwischen den beiden Mächten;* and *Observations sur la negotiation entre l' Angleterre et la France en* 1806.[110] Of these the first mentioned is the most important.

The *Fragmente* make up a somewhat heterogeneous whole. Their text was written in the months of September and October of 1805, their introduction, however, in the beginning of 1806, and the whole work was published in the summer of 1806. The political situations at the times when these parts originated were thus quite different, and to this is attributable the differences of tone pervading the whole work: the text is still optimistic, the introduction, however, even though decided, is filled with forebodings. The latter only is of interest here and it may be well to make clear its general character by means of a few citations. Gentz first submits the question from whom help may be expected, and finds that there is no counting either on governments or on public opinion; one hope only is left, the small group of "the strong, the pure and the good." To these he turns, therefore, demanding of them in incisive and fiery words to hold out. "You to whom these words are first addressed," he writes, "you the lone pride of our country, you who are high of purpose and subdued by no misfortune, Germans worthy of the name—be not weary, despair not. . . . . The real task of liberation must be performed on German soil. Here the restoration must begin just as here the ruin was accomplished and destruction brought to its completion. Europe fell through Germany; through Germany it must rise again. . . . . Our inward

[110]Weick, IV, 1-199; III, 1-370. *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 105-220.

and fatal dissension, the distraction of our great strength, the mutual rivalries of our princes and the mutual estrangement of their peoples, the extinction of every genuine feeling for the common interests of the nation, the dormancy of national spirit—these have been the conquerors, these the destroyers of our freedom, these our deadly enemies and the enemies of Europe. . . . . Divided we fell; only united can we rise again. . . . . You must fight as long as there is breath left in you. . . . . Remember how even in idle sports every untimely rest is dangerous for those who have started in the race, and how the maxim of the victorious is to press on toward the goal with ceaseless and ever renewed energy. In your career, to pause is fatal. As soon as you stop, you lose your power, the sleep of hopelessness overcomes you, and the night which surrounds you on all sides settles down upon you with all its horrors. The more persistently, the more earnestly you press forward, the more surely will your weariness leave you, the sooner hopes bearing the freshness of morning dawn will spring up in you."[111] The text of the *Fragmente* itself gives an historical retrospect of the events of the years just past, and from it we may be allowed to quote at least the following passage: "Whether Bonaparte has really conceived the idea of a universal monarchy in his proud and gloomy soul, and in what shape he has conceived it, and how far he has carried it in his imagination, and when and how he has thought to realize it—all this only the future will reveal. This much is clear and certain, however: for six dreadful years he has done without intermission that which he had to do with the worst designs in view, and he has succeeded in taking steps which seem to forebode in no uncertain way the most dreadful and desperate outcome possible."[112]

Besides these publications, the following memorials belong to this period: *Über die Ursachen des unglücklichen*

[111] Weick, IV, 29 ff.

[112] *Ibid.*, IV, 69.

Ganges des letzten Feldzugs (spring of 1806), which is known to us only fragmentarily;[113] a second, *Sur les moyens de mettre un terme aux malheurs et aux dangers de l'Europe et sur les principes d'une pacification générale* (summer of 1806);[114] a third, addressed to the Russian minister Budberg and to the Czar (spring of 1807);[115] a fourth, on the Russian war-manifesto (spring of 1808), which was sent to Canning and is also unknown;[116] and lastly a fifth, *Was würde das Haus Österreich unter den jetzigen Umständen zu beschliessen haben, um Deutschland auf eine dauerhafte Weise von fremder Gewalt zu befreien?* (close of 1808 and beginning of 1809).[117] To give the contents of these memorials in detail does not lie within the province of our present consideration. It may, however, be mentioned that Gentz again demands an Austro-Prussian alliance as the foundation for an enduring European peace, that he terms the liberation of Germany the most important common interest of Europe, that he projects the plan for a new German federal constitution and advises Austria to transfer its center of gravity towards Hungary.[118] Most interesting perhaps are the propositions made in the memorial to Budberg of April, 1807, that is to say, of the time between Eylau and Friedland; they have as their purpose to force Austria either to join the Russian-Prussian combination, or to make peace at once and save her strength for a later struggle.

The number of prominent persons with whom Gentz came in contact during this period was, according to his own testimony, "enormous." Among them he mentions Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, the dukes of Weimar and Coburg, with whom he plunged into "endless enjoyment and frivolities," many names from the Bohemian no-

[113] Schlesier, IV, 207 ff.
[114] *Aus dem Nachlasse*, II, 7-99.
[115] Martens, *Recueil des Traités*, VI, 479 (abridged).
[116] *Tagebücher*, I, 53.
[117] *Aus dem Nachlasse*, II, 109-158.
[118] *Ibid.*, II, 156 ff., 135 ff., 97.

bility, the Princess of Solms, a sister of Queen Louise, who for several years was destined to stand at the head of those whom he adored, Madame de Staël and A. W. Schlegel, certain Prussian and Russian generals, Wintzingerode, Metternich, and, lastly, Baron Stein.[119] Gentz met the latter for the first time at Dresden in August, 1806, and saw him again in January, 1809, at Prague, where they discussed plans for the future in daily conversations.[120] Stein went from Prague on to Brünn, and received there, through Gentz, an invitation from Stadion to come to Vienna.[121] Gentz always speaks of Stein with high regard, and the latter's resignation in 1808 concerned him much; he was even prepared to grant him "the dictatorship in the real, ancient Roman sense of the word over everything which has to be undertaken for the salvation of Germany."[122] Stein for his part was not quite so enthusiastic over Gentz; he acknowledged, however, his courage and political loyalty. Whether the two men influenced one another and if so, in how far, is not easy to determine and would certainly require minute investigations.

That this intercourse of Gentz's was not politically unimportant is clear enough and is confirmed by Napoleon's attitude toward him. As a rule Napoleon paid but slight attention to foes of Gentz's rank; at times, however, he did proceed against such, as for example against the unfortunate Palm. His attention was turned toward Gentz by the Prussian war-manifesto of 1806, which he attributed to him, at least for a time, and one of his bulletins of 1806 denounced to the world this wretched writer. In the summer of 1808, Napoleon received word, through his agents, that there was located in the Bohemian baths a band of confederates who had relations with London and Vienna and were under the leadership of this same Gentz; the presence of Madame de Staël was also properly empha-

[119] *Tagebücher*, I, 44 ff.

[120] *Ibid.*, I, 58 f.

[121] Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Friedrich Gentz*, I, 302.

[122] Pertz, *Leben des Ministers Freiherrn vom Stein*, II, 331.

sized.[123] The result was that he immediately ordered the suppression of Gentz's correspondence with this lady, and renewed his attacks upon the conspirator through the French and German press that was dependent upon him. Nothing further, however, came of it, for a course such as had been pursued against Palm or Stein was then not to be thought of in dealing with Austria.

As concerns Gentz's more official relations to the powers of the old Coalition, those with Prussia were of predominant importance. Especially interesting is the journey which he undertook in October, 1806, and at Haugwitz's invitation, to the Prussian headquarters in Thuringia.[124] His stay there lasted ten days, from the 3rd to the 12th of October, and during this time he had numerous conversations with leading Prussian personages such as with the duke of Brunswick, with Counts Kalkreuth and Götzen, the Marquis Lucchesini, Lombard, and Haugwitz; the last three formed the trio which Gentz, half a year before, had wished death on the wheel. From Haugwitz he learned at once the alleged reason for his invitation: his visit was desired in order that he might be convinced of the purity and expediency of the present Prussian policy. In further conversations, Haugwitz explained the objects of this policy in detail and touched, at the same time, once more upon the motive for calling Gentz: what was desired of him, so Haugwitz explained, was less his counsel or his help as a publicist than his good will in general; Prussia was accused of unreliability and duplicity, without having deserved it at all, and this suspicion Gentz could aid in destroying at Vienna and elsewhere. Finally, Haugwitz asked whether Gentz was in a position to give any information about the intentions of the Austrian cabinet. To this Gentz replied in the negative, adding that it would perhaps be more to the purpose to let the past rest and to hope for a justification in the eyes of the public from

[123]Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, III, 315.

[124]His journal on this voyage is published in *Mém. et lett. inéd.*, 221-346.

Prussia's present attitude. The succeeding days were spent principally in conversation with Lombard, with whom Gentz had become acquainted earlier at Berlin. Lombard first spoke at length on the necessity of the former Prussian policy of neutrality, in which he himself had taken a leading part, and then gave Gentz the plan of a letter from the king to Napoleon with the request that he read it and give his opinion on it. Gentz acquiesced in the request and raised various objections. Later Lombard presented a second sketch, that of the Prussian war-manifesto, the composition of which had also been entrusted to him. Again Gentz made unfavorable criticisms, and on his suggestion certain passages were stricken out, such as those concerning the affairs of the duke of Enghien, and the attempts at influencing the later Louis XVIII to renounce his claims to the throne; also others concerning the English control of the seas and the probable attitude of Austria. Finally, Gentz undertook the translation of the manifesto into German, without, however, being in full agreement with either its form or its contents. From certain indications he concluded that the impression which his presence at the Prussian headquarters was bound to make upon the outside world had been the real basis of his invitation.

In connection with this journey there are still other instances to be mentioned in which Gentz came into touch, in a more or less official way, with Prussian men of prominence. On his own testimony, he formed, in September, 1806—that is to say immediately before this journey—a connecting link between Berlin and Vienna[125] and urged in July, 1806, the king of Sweden to desist from war with Prussia.[126] In January, 1807, he negotiated with Count Götzen on his own responsibility concerning the temporary occupation of the Prussian fortresses in Silesia by Austrian troops.[127]

Gentz's relations with London remained active, al-

[125] Schlesier, IV, 262.

[126] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 455.

[127] *Tagebücher*, I, 51.

though we have but little information as to the reports and suggestions that he sent there. The most important of what we do know is a letter to Canning, written in June, 1808.[128] Gentz offers in this two suggestions: England is either to leave the Continent to itself, to bring Spanish America into its own power and in this way to weaken Spain directly and Napoleon indirectly—or, in case she should contemplate holding to the Continent, to work in conjunction with Austria. Incidentally we also hear that he sends expositions of his views to the English press.[129]

Thus three years of a restless, but on the whole not unpleasant exile had passed by, when the long awaited hour of Gentz's official recognition struck at last. In February, 1809, Stadion, Cobenzl's successor, called him to Vienna, and from this dates a new period in his life: he now entered the inner circle of the *Staatskanzlei*, which he was never to leave again.

Austria once more rose against Napoleon early in 1809, and when war was already as good as certain, Gentz received the commission of writing the war-manifesto. As Napoleon drew nearer Vienna for a second time, Gentz fled to Dotis, where the court and the high dignitaries were staying; at the end of October, he went on to Prague. In February, 1810, we find him, however, again at Vienna. He had a share in the protracted peace negotiations of the summer of 1809, or better, in the struggles and intrigues among the various parties at court and within the government pertaining to these negotiations. If we should attempt to form an exact estimate of his activity during this time, from his own accounts[130] and from other materials,[131] we should find that Gentz considered a really dishonorable peace as unacceptable, but urged the conclusion of a peace under conditions which could be endured; when Napoleon had modified his original demands, Gentz insisted upon accepting them.

[128] *Mitteil. d. Instituts f. Österr. Geschichtsf.*, XXI, 148 ff.
[129] *Deutsche Rundschau*, CLII, 274.
[130] *Tagebücher*, I, 70-208.
[131] *Deutsche Rundschau*, CXXXXIV, 223-251.

But what was now to become of himself? As early as 1806 and again in 1808, he had attracted Napoleon's attention, and in July, 1809, even one of his letters to Count Stadion fell into the hands of the French.[132] Something unpleasant was surely to be expected, and hence Gentz asked his English friends to find him a suitable place of refuge in England.[133]

3. 1813-1815.

The years 1810-1812 form a period of rest in Gentz's life. The insatiable apostle of war and one-time conspirator is now living most of the time in comparative quiet at Vienna, where at last he begins to receive official recognition; occasionally we find him in Teplitz. He has suspended the struggle against Napoleon for the time being and is silent. Even toward his friends he is now rather uncommunicative, although this apparent fact may be due to the loss of the greater part of the letters that he wrote to them during this time.

The political situation of Europe and especially that of Austria had, in the meantime, changed essentially. The disastrous outcome of the war of 1809 imposed upon Austria the necessity of a complete break, at least for the present, with her previous policy, and of seeking a union with France. Stadion was, therefore, released and Metternich, the Austrian ambassador at Paris, took his place. In the spring of 1810 the marriage of Napoleon with a daughter of Emperor Francis took place and by this marriage there was added to the political bonds between the two countries a dynastic one as well. For the time being the cabinet of Vienna felt, therefore, assured and even flattered, and in a certain sense rightly so, for the French marriage was indeed an Austrian success. Whether this was good politics for the future, was, however, less certain. A clearing up of the European atmosphere on a large scale had not

[132] *Ibid.*, CXXXXIV, 234.

[133] Guglia, *Friedrich v. Gentz*, 230.

yet been attained; on the contrary, the huge conflict which for years had divided Europe into two camps, had now in reality become even more tremendous. After having attached Italy and the petty German states to himself, after having thrice conquered Austria and rendered Prussia almost defenseless, Napoleon found England still in arms, Spain in open rebellion, and Russia on the point of slipping from his grasp. It was rather probable that he would not give up his fight with England and the Spanish insurgents. With Russia he might get along for some time yet; but it was also possible that matters there might come to an open break, and in such an event Austria was in danger of being drawn into the vortex.

The immediate effect of these conditions on Gentz's situation was that he had to wait and remain silent; such conduct was perhaps even imposed upon him officially.[134] He had for a long time been personally acquainted with Metternich, and from all appearances did not now find it hard to work under him. During the years 1810 and 1811, he was employed by him only from time to time, and then for the most part on financial treatises;[135] after 1812, however, Metternich entrusted to him strictly political work as well, and Gentz himself later designates the end of this year as the beginning of his real political activity.[136] In 1812 he writes, upon his own initiative, two treatises on maritime law in which he defends the English standpoint; their method of argumentation is essentially historical,[137] and the fact that Gentz could thus still champion the interests of England shows that the injunction to silence laid upon him could not have been absolute. On the whole his life is, during these three years, somewhat uneventful. He repeatedly asserts that he still stands where he did, so far as principles and inclinations are concerned, but con-

[134] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* I, 341.

[135] *Tagebücher,* I, 214, 255, 234. On pp. 229 ff. Gentz mentions, however, such an order.

[136] Schlesier, V, 320 f.

[137] *Mém. et lett. inéd.,* 347-452.

fesses that he has learned to be more quiet, more just, more tolerant and more cool-headed.[138]

Gentz raises no objections to Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise after it has been decided upon; he favors it, however, only for political and not for any human reasons.[139] The death of Queen Louise touches him deeply and he remarks not unjustly that by it Prussia has lost the only great decoration which it still possessed.[140] The fate of the Prussian state itself concerns him rather little; he, a Prussian by birth, goes even so far as to call, without any show of emotion, his native state a "dying machine".[141] As to England, his views now have changed; his attitude toward this power is, for the time being, markedly less favorable than formerly, and he defends this turn by referring to the change of conditions.[142] According to him, England should fall in with the other powers and come to terms with France; her present relations to the Continent must end, for they are, to a degree, pitiable as well as antagonistic to the common interests.[143] The fact that by this time English newspapers and magazines had become well-nigh inaccessible to Continental readers seriously inconvenienced him.[144] To his still greater discomfort, however, the English remittances ceased to come during 1809;[145] by favoring a speedy conclusion of peace in 1809 Gentz had become *persona non grata* to the powers at London and was now to be punished for his independent attitude.[146] In 1811, it is true, remittances from England seem to have arrived once more.[147] Personally Gentz is mostly on the move; in October, 1810, for instance, he informs Brinckmann where letters will reach him: "on the route from Dresden to

[138] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 306 f.
[139] Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 35 f.
[140] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 309.
[141] *Ibid.*, I, 309.
[142] Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 37.
[143] *Ibid.*, 37, 45. *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, I, 305.
[144] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz*, II, 314, 317.
[145] *Tagebücher*, I, 214.
[146] *Preuss. Jahrb.*, CX, 495.
[147] *Tagebücher*, I, 255 f.

Vienna, either in Vienna itself or in Prague, or in Teplitz, or in the country somewhere near this route."[148] The charming Teplitz attracted him above everything else, and should we care to look in upon him there, we might enjoy the spectacle of this ever young gallant and man of society in devoted and boundless adoration of the many bright lights in the heaven of feminine grace.[149]

Almost three years had passed, in this fashion, after the conclusion of peace, when the great turn of affairs which Gentz was hoping for finally came, although he was not divining its coming and did not hail it with joy. Napoleon at last definitely broke with the Czar, and in the summer of 1812, actual hostilities began. Gentz deplored this renewal of the conflict between the leading powers on the Continent as a pernicious disturbance of the European peace, and was especially aroused over the Russian proclamation urging the formation of a German legion; to take a step such as this, he declared in full harmony with his political theories, was tantamount to inviting foreign subjects to render a verdict on their own governments.[150] He hoped for French reverses,[151] but heard, during the next months, only this much, that the armies of the emperor were irresistably moving toward Moscow. After the middle of November, reports of Napoleon's embarrassment came in, and by the middle of December Vienna heard of his flight from Russia and the dispatch of an Austrian negotiator to Paris. The moment was, as Gentz rightly observed, "immensely critical." The question was: what was Austria to do now? For the time being, everybody was in darkness as to that; Metternich might, perhaps, have given some light, but preferred to remain silent, partially even toward Gentz.

While Napoleon was making energetic preparations for a new campaign, Gentz began once more to wield his

[148] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* II, 313.
[149] *Ibid.,* II, 288 ff., 313, 422.
[150] *Deutsche Rundschau,* CLII, 443 f.
[151] *Tagebücher,* I, 260 ff.

pen with the old vigor. What was he striving for? If we survey his activity from the spring of 1813 to the summer of 1814, we may, as regards his policies, divide it into four periods: 1. spring, 1813, until the battle of Bautzen, May 20-21; 2. from Bautzen to the Austrian declaration of war against France, middle of August; 3. from the declaration of war to the battle of Leipzig, October 18; 4. from Leipzig to the conclusion of peace in 1814.

The lines of division between these periods are marked, as will be seen, by events of a more or less military character, and this fact is not without significance as to the conception of the Gentz of this period. Gentz is, by this time, no more the old rash idealist; he has rather become a man open to the realities of life, a *Realpolitiker* who cares first of all for success. Caution now guides his actions. He carefully weighs the chances of each side from case to case before deciding in favour of any line of policy and is ready to change political tactics as soon as conditions change; he has learned that to avoid risking the loss of everything a statesman may, at times, have to leave his tracks and take up another road.

Gentz retained, during this period, his general political aims, especially that of the European balance of power; yet he pursued them less vigorously, for he directed his attention now no less to the particular interests of Austria than to those of Europe in general. His immediate aim was, at first, to make the Habsburg monarchy independent of France, to reduce the French power to its proper limits and have some of the territories ceded by Austria and Prussia during the last years restored to them; this being accomplished, the European balance of power would, of course, re-establish itself automatically. Soon, however, as early as in the summer of 1813, Gentz began to become markedly distrustful of Russia and Prussia and to emphasize more and more, in like gradation, the special interests of Austria. He has, on account of this, been harshly criticised, and his political attitude during the campaign of 1814 does indeed deserve some criticism; however, if we try to do him

justice, we can not seriously accuse him of having left his colors. He was ready, then as ever, to fight for his principles, provided that the fight was not hopeless and others acted with him; but it was just this provision which, as he thought to discover, remained unfulfilled. If he now, in the spring and summer of 1813, counselled avoiding war, if he later opposed its continuance and emphasized the specifically Austrian interests, he did so from fear of Napoleon and—of Austria's allies.

Until about the end of May, 1813, Gentz's utterances breathe a rather decided, though not a warlike, spirit. He urges Nesselrode at St. Petersburg, in case of war breaking out once more, to put before Austria the alternative of either declaring its neutrality or of binding itself secretly to co-operation with Russia.[152] Similar in their purport, but clearer and more detailed are his remarks to Wessenberg, then Austrian envoy at Munich, dating from March and May of the same year.[153] Gentz's paramount idea there is that of the necessity of common action between the three eastern powers; Austria, he states without any sign of disapproval, made declarations to Russia and Prussia which are such as to bind her to both. Of almost equal importance is the thought of inducing Napoleon to make concessions without recurring to war; Gentz seems to assume that this plan might be realized, though he does not expressly say so. The concessions referred to would consist, in the main, in the ceding of Germany, Italy and Spain; should Napoleon refuse to agree to them, then Austria would, after its declarations, have to join Russia and Prussia. Austria must, at any rate, avoid all dilatory measures and prepare for war. As to England, Gentz declares it was to be hoped that this power would not make peace impossible by taking up an obstinate attitude. Even on May 2, the day of the battle of Gross-Görschen, he writes that Austria was to join the allies irrespective of a possible early reverse.

[152] *Lettres et papiers du chancelier comte de Nesselrode*, V, 27 ff.

[153] Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 62-66, 74.

In the meantime, Napoleon had again appeared in Germany and opened the campaign in Saxony at the head of a somewhat composite but strong army. On May 2 there followed the battle of Gross-Görschen, and on May 20-21 that of Bautzen, both of which were victories for the French; on June 4, an armistice of several weeks was concluded between the belligerents, and during it both sides tried to get support from the rear and to win over Austria. Cobenzl's aims before 1805 had, then, at last become more than a dream: Austria was now the mediator between the rival powers, holding the balance of decision in her hands. Which of the contesting parties was the better to side with was not clear yet; Napoleon might be the stronger at present, but every passing hour must reduce his superiority. Austria's interests demanded, therefore, that the pros and cons be weighed in the most careful manner, and this task Metternich now took in hand with the objectivity of the cool calculator.

That the two Napoleonic victories did not fail to impress Gentz may be seen from his letters written to Metternich and Wessenberg during May, June and July, 1813. They re-established to him, for the present, the military reputation and general prestige of the emperor; and from this he drew forthwith conclusions. In the beginning of June he frankly acknowledges Napoleon's "immense military superiority" and "art", declaring that the prospects of the allies were far from splendid; even if Austria should join the latter, the issue of the war would, to him, remain "very doubtful", and this the statesmen at Vienna might well take into account before coming to any decision.[154] Should Austria decide upon war against Napoleon, so he explains, in the beginning of July, to Wessenberg, it would have to concentrate its main army on the Elbe, while at the same time an army of some 60,000 men might be formed in Bavaria to be pushed forth toward the Austrian left flank.[155]

Gentz considered, nevertheless, this superiority as but

[154] *Ibid.*, 74 ff. *Deutsche Rundschau*, CLII, 446.

[155] Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 82.

a temporary one. Napoleon, he writes to Metternich in June,[156] long ago passed the zenith of his career and is now on the road to "certain ruin"; Austria has, therefore, but to find out whether his ruin will be hastened more by war or by keeping peace, and Gentz believes that this question must be answered in favour of the first side of the alternative. Should Austria, he states, join the allies and the war be continued, Napoleon would only be given an opportunity of inflicting a deadly blow on the Habsburg Empire while he still possesses the power to do so; that, however, would mean the postponement of the liberation of Europe. On the other hand, could the present crisis be passed without bloodshed, then Austria and the Continent might save their forces for a later and decisive struggle. To pass the crisis peacefully does to Gentz, it is true, not mean to allow present conditions to continue. These conditions must be changed, on that point, he thinks, everybody in Austria is agreed; and they must be changed by means of diplomatic negotiations with France tending toward a settlement of the crisis through French concessions. But of what kind should these be? Gentz answers the question extensively in a letter to Metternich of the middle of June. He there distinguishes—it is true, not very clearly—between the concessions to be granted by France in return for a "truce", that is a temporary peace, and those of the permanent peace. The first would comprise the dissolution of the duchy of Warsaw, a "restitution" of Prussia by the cession of Magdeburg and the evacuation of Hamburg, finally the cession to Austria of at least the Illyrian provinces; Gentz would, perhaps, be satisfied even with the granting of the first of these three points. A permanent peace, on the other hand, would have to be preceeded by France's renunciation of every direct and indirect influence over Germany, eastern and central Italy. Whether Gentz seriously expected that Napoleon would consent to such concessions is hard to say. In general, he seems to ignore

[156] *Deutsche Rundschau*, CLII. 446 f.

the possibility of a refusal on the part of Napoleon; at times, however, as for instance in the middle of June, he shows that he takes this possibility into account.[157]

Gentz nowhere suggests, at this time, that Austria should negotiate with Napoleon separately; he undoubtedly thinks of a joint action of the three eastern powers. Somewhat varying, however, are his views on the particular manner and the intensity of this action. In a letter to Metternich of June 5, for instance, he appears to be rather uneasy lest Austria might have become too intimate with Russia and Prussia, and again, five days later he emphasizes the great importance of Austria's co-operation with these powers;[158] possibly this wavering resulted from his having received, in the interval between the two letters, certain information from Metternich that is unknown to us. On the whole, it may be said that Gentz at that time, did not wish Austria seriously to bind itself in any way, and on this account he gravely criticises Metternich for concluding the treaty of Reichenbach.[159] Austria, he states, is entirely free to act as she sees fit; she is now the "center of protest" against the Napoleonic hegemony, and when the time shall have come for Europe to order her affairs definitively, this settlement will be arrived at under Austrian leadership.[160]

At the beginning of June, Gentz went to Ratiborzitz in Bohemia in order to watch, at short range, the course of events; for there or near by had gathered the sovereigns and prime ministers of the three eastern powers. Soon, he boasts to Rahel: "I have chosen this place as my headquarters because I am situated here in the midst of all the great transactions, and am yet enjoying all the comforts and pleasures of life. . . . I know everything; no one on earth knows what I know of contemporary history, for

[157] *Ibid.*, CLII, 453.
[158] *Ibid.*, CLII, 447, 450.
[159] *Ibid.*, CLII, 460.
[160] *Ibid.*, CLII, 446. Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 77, note.

nobody ever was or can be in such deep intimacy with so many leading parties and individuals".[161] In this, of course, he exaggerates. Much, no doubt, but certainly not everything reached his ear; what he did learn often came to him indirectly. Metternich does not seem to have taken him into his innermost confidence; at any rate, he failed to inform Gentz properly about Austria's negotiations with Russia and Prussia in the spring of 1813 as well as of the later conclusion of the truce and the treaty of Reichenbach.[162] On the other hand, it is perfectly probable that Gentz met, at Ratiborzitz, many persons of the first rank and importance, and some of these he must have met in a semi-official way; among them were W. von Humboldt and Nesselrode with whom he conferred concerning the agreement of Reichenbach. In the middle of June Gentz was received by the Czar, and one of his letters to Metternich contains a report of the conversation carried on by the two men.[163] Gentz found the Czar ready to make advances to Austria and spoke, in his turn, frankly about the general situation as he saw it. It was important, he explained, not to forget that the attitude of the three eastern powers to the war-question were rather different: to Prussia the war was one of necessity, almost of despair; to Russia half a matter of honour, and half one of political calculations; to Austria, finally, a pure problem of business. Metternich had, at any rate, to act simply and purely "as an Austrian minister", and this the Czar, Gentz added, would probably agree to. The main point was that the three powers should stand together, to make effective their attitude of protest against the present conditions and against "*tout système d' envahissement et de prépondérance*"; this protest should form "the fundamental law of every anti-Napoleonic policy and an almost certain basis for the gradual restoration of the balance of power and order in Europe." Finally, Gentz remarked that the ques-

[161] Schlesier, I, 126 ff.
[162] *Deutsche Rundschau*, CLII, 447, 451 f., 460.
[163] *Ibid.*, CLII, 455 ff.

tion as to the continuation of the war should be decided upon only by Russia, Prussia and Austria in common.

In the middle of July Gentz went with Metternich to the congress held at Prague; he was not allowed admittance to its sessions, but otherwise, Metternich treated him not without confidence and gave him, at the end of July, the commission to prepare a war-manifesto.[164] As the transactions in Prague did not result in anything, Austria in the second week of August declared war against France. A few days later, Metternich left Prague, and returned to the army. Gentz remained there for the time being, and not until December did he go to the headquarters of the allies. The three months which he thus spent in the Bohemian capital made up, perhaps, the period of his life in which for the first time he felt completely happy; another like period came with the Congress of Vienna. According to his own testimony he was at this time "the intermediary in all important political relations between Vienna and the headquarters, the channel of all authentic news, the centre of all diplomatic circles and of all diplomacy;" he was "highly honored" at Prague, his name had become "great", his health left nothing to be desired, he had money in plenty and the Emperor deigned to nominate him as court counsellor.[165] If these statements are correct, Gentz was then the actual civil head of the government in Prague; at any rate, he was one of its heads, especially since the censorship of the press in that city lay in his hands. At one time he gives Rahel a pretty description of his various duties and activities: "Today," he writes, "I have already the following behind me—the correction of the papers—a trip to the general in command and an hour's conversation with him—the dispatch of a courier to Linz and Teplitz—and an hour ago, receiving a special courier from Teplitz, whom Metternich sent me this morning, and the re-dispatching of this courier to Vienna. It is now three

[164] *Tagebücher*, I, 264 f.
[165] *Ibid.*, I, 266 f.

o'clock."[166] In the beginning of October, Stein came through Prague and offered Gentz, according to his statement, a place in the commission, formed for the administration of the territories about to be conquered.[167] Up to Metternich's departure from Prague, Gentz had "many important conversations" with him, "particularly about German affairs;" it is not without interest to hear him assert that the main content of these conversations was the new spirit of Prussia, as well as the fear that the fall of Napoleon might bring, instead of a restoration, a second revolution.[168] As Gentz himself says, it was he who first expressed these fears, and from this we may conclude that they were at that time no longer new with him; apparently, they had formed one of his chief reasons for opposing war in June of this year.

In the beginning of December, Gentz left Prague to go to the headquarters of the allies at Freiburg i. B. and took there part in the discussions concerning a march of the allies through Switzerland.[169] In January, 1814, he returned to Vienna, where up to the convening of the congress a series of duties occupied him: he kept up a lively correspondence with Metternich and drafted several memorials to him, of which however only a single one is known; he exercised the censorship of the political newspapers supplying them, at the same time, with articles, translated manifestos, held the position of informant to the Hospodar of Wallachia, Caradja, for which he had been recommended by Metternich in 1812, and fulfilled, finally, his old duties of social intercourse.

In passing, we may call attention to a remark that Gentz makes, in his diaries, on his journey from Prague to Freiburg.[170] As he tells us, he ascended the "high mountain" over which the road leads near Schwäbisch-Hall on

[166] Schlesier, I, 150.
[167] *Tagebücher*, I, 268.
[168] *Ibid.*, I, 269.
[169] *Ibid.*, I, 272.
[170] *Ibid.*, I, 271 f.

foot and without any discomfort, and concludes from this that his strength and health must be good. As a matter of fact, we may gather from this report only this much, that Gentz must, by this time, have arrived at a rather high degree of physical inactivity and feebleness, for there are no "high mountains" whatever in Swabian Franconia. Indeed, he was so used to a comfortable, luxurious life that in 1813 he could write concerning his stay in Prague, quite after the fashion of a *beatus possidens*: "One of the best French cooks . . . accompanied me everywhere. My domestic life was entirely as I wished it, it was all that an unmarried aristocrat could desire in the way of comfort and elegance."[171]

From the declaration of war by Austria to the battle of Leipzig, Gentz's sympathies are on the side of the allies. This not only his official position demanded, but the general situation as well; Napoleon had not shown himself reasonable at Prague and it was, therefore, necessary to bring him to his senses by further blows. The victory of Leipzig, he greets with enthusiasm.[172] After it, however, he wishes peace to be concluded, and the proposals of the allies to France in November, 1813, containing the offer of the Rhine and Alpine boundaries were quite in harmony with his views. As they were not seriously considered by Napoleon, nothing was left to do but to renew the war; the question was, however, with what intensity war should be waged, and what was to be its ultimate purpose. Gentz held the opinion that it was necessary to keep always in view a speedy conclusion of peace, and accordingly he fairly overwhelms Metternich with urgent requests to seize every opportunity in this direction; above all, he wishes him to paralyse the evil influence of Blücher and other "madmen."[173] Anything but "war of annihilation," he

[171] *Ibid.*, I, 271.

[172] Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 89 f., 92.

[173] *Ibid.*, 220, 233 ff., 238 ff., 247, 267 f., 274, 283, 316, 325 ff.

exclaims, anything but an overthrow of Napoleon and a restoration of the Bourbons, for all that would only tend to strengthen the position of the non-Austrian members of the Coalition![174] Metternich would do best to establish direct relations with Napoleon and discuss with him alone the foundations of future peace.[175]

The best insight into Gentz's views and feelings at this time may be gained from a memorial of February, 1814, and two letters of November, 1813, resp. March, 1814, all of which were directed to Metternich.[176]

The first of these letters has reference to the impending territorial rearrangement of Europe but throws, at the same time, a strange light on the state of mind into which Gentz gradually had come. Austria and Russia, he now proposes, are first to arrive at an understanding as to the future territorial extension of the European powers in general, and of Germany in particular, and secretly to obtain England's approval of these arrangements. Then Prussia, Bavaria, Sweden, the petty states of Europe and England as well are formally to be "invited" to join the two afore mentioned powers, which they can hardly refuse to do. When this is attained, Russia will withdraw from further negotiations. Austria and Prussia, however, will conclude alliances with one another, and also each with the remaining German states, which will form the back-bone of the new German federation; these alliances are later to be confirmed by all the non-German powers. The number of states in the new German union is not to be more than sixteen. "In this way, therefore," Gentz concludes, "the great question, as a matter of fact, would be settled by Austria alone with the assistance of Russia and England, . . . but in the eyes of the world everything would be so handled and ordered as though Austria and Prussia had completed the task in common. This outward appearance is as necessary to present and future peace and quiet as

[174] *Ibid.*, 270 f., 210.
[175] *Ibid.*, 293.
[176] *Ibid.*, 98-103, 248-262, 280.

is the actual exclusion of Prussia, Sweden, Bavaria, and all the other powers of secondary rank from every decision of importance." To this Gentz adds the remark that Austria's position in the future German federation would have to be that of the *primus inter pares*.

The memorial deals with the question of Napoleon's removal. Gentz does not deny a general right of intervention of the powers in France, but he denies most decidedly that this right should extend to the dethroning of a legitimate sovereign, and as such he now regards Napoleon. Whether the latter, he declares, attained his power in an unjust manner cannot be so quickly determined, at any rate he has long ago ceased to be, so far as the French people are concerned, an usurper; besides, he has been recognized as sovereign by all European powers save England, and a recognition of this kind cannot simply be annulled. If it were planned to leave it to the French people to decide whether Napoleon should continue to be their sovereign, this would be, after all, nothing but a recognition of popular sovereignty. The Bourbons have no further claim to the French throne; their restoration is to the advantage of Russia and England alone, and is, therefore, urged by these two powers. There may perhaps be some doubt as to whether Austria would be able to prevent the return of the Bourbons; but if the allied armies shall once have reached Paris, this will certainly no longer be possible.

From the second letter referred to above, the following passage may be quoted: "My policy becomes daily more egotistic and downright Austrian. The word Europe has become a horror to me. A common revenge is no longer to be thought of. The greatest desire I have is to see the Coalition buried at once. Then I should wish that we were grown so great and so strong that everyone would have to tremble before us and to court our favor; I would not hasten into new alliances; only Bavaria, Wurtemberg and those who are to rule in Lombardy and Piedmont, and if possible Switzerland, would I unite with us; what is to

become of Russia, Prussia, France and England, so far as we are concerned, the next years will have to decide. I put no trust in any of these powers, and give none of them credit for good intentions toward us. Furthermore, I would not yield to Russia a single farm in Galicia, and would do my utmost to take Warsaw from her."

Gentz's attitude has, then, by this time become decidedly distrustful of the allies and almost friendly to Napoleon. If we wish to understand it, we shall have to trace it back to its motives.

One of these motives and perhaps the strongest one, was Gentz's old anxiety about the balance of power. He strove, as we know, in the last analysis, for a European federal system, and considered such a system without this balance of power as absolutely inconceivable; the latter, however, he believed to be threatened or even eliminated since the beginning of the century by France and Russia. France was now weakened, and in the future it might be further weakened; Russia, therefore, was left, and Russia alone, as the European peril, the same Russia that had been and would be Austria's particular rival in Poland and the Balkan peninsula. Was France, then, to be so completely conquered that Russian supremacy must become unavoidable? Would that not but mean giving up one master for another? And even in case Russia were not able to get for herself the leadership of Europe, her position would, nevertheless, be extremely dangerous to certain other powers; for who could guarantee that Russia might not all at once extend her hand to France? Everything must, therefore, be avoided which might strengthen this colossus, and the restoration of the Bourbons be prohibited; for if accomplished this restoration would essentially help toward a Russian-French *rapprochement*.[177] Prussia he thinks, has the same dangers to fear from a return of the Bourbons; unfortunately, however, the Prussian cabinet is well-nigh powerless against the radical demands of

[177] Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 257 f., 287 f.

certain elements, first of all against those of the army.[178] As to England, he is afraid that in the new Europe the old leaning of the British cabinet toward Russia might become a source of great inconvenience to the balance of power and, therefore, especially to Austria; besides, England too is interested in the return of the Bourbons.[179] Taking into account all these considerations, it must be granted that Gentz was right, from his standpoint, in changing his political tactics after the victory of Leipzig. Other circumstances demanded other means. The powers, as he was convinced, were pursuing a policy of self-interest; Austria was, therefore, compelled to do the same, for only in this way could she still hope to get her rights.

So far, then, Gentz maintained his old position. He soon leaves it, however, in so far as he looses all sense of moderation in championing these new diplomatic tactics. His desire to spare France and not allow Russia to gain in strength was logical and comprehensible; his plans looking toward new conditions in Germany, on the other hand, are entirely incompatible with a system whose fundamental idea was the equality of the powers and a common regulation of all European questions. They must be explained differently, and their proper explanation is to be found in a somewhat new element in Gentz's nature: his new Austrian patriotism. In this, therefore, we are to see the second cause of his attitude in 1814. Originally a cosmopolitan with certain pan-German tendencies, Gentz had gradually yielded to the influence of his Viennese environments and his hatred of Russia, to arrive finally at a solid *Österreichertum*, with which was doubtless mingled what Bismarck once termed "*Ressortpatriotismus*"; it began to manifest itself in him even before 1813, and after Leipzig it reached its full vigor.[180]

In comparison with these motives, others are hardly worthy of consideration, as for instance Gentz's personal

[178] *Ibid.*, 257.
[179] *Ibid.*, 238, 258, 287 f.
[180] *Ibid.*, 248, 271, 280.

relations to Metternich. As far as the material which is available permits of conclusions, it must be acknowledged that Gentz always speaks of his chief's policy only in the most respectful terms; he does not, however, hesitate to offer substantial criticism. The relations between the two men were, at least until 1815, far less those of dependence of one upon the other than those of two sovereign powers, except for the fact that every decision naturally rested with Metternich. Gentz has been termed, at times, Metternich's clerk, and again his prompter; but in reality he was neither the one nor the other. Metternich until then never seems to have taken him into his innermost confidence, and Gentz himself often mildly complains about this attitude.[181]

While Gentz was thus protesting against the continuation of the war, the allies gradually pressed on toward Paris and there forced Napoleon to abdicate. With this the war against the latter was temporarily ended.

The tremendous task of European reorganization which was now to be undertaken fell to the Congress of Vienna. As its secretary, and as Metternich's assistant, Gentz was initiated into many of the secrets as well as frivolities of these nine months and he felt, there, quite in his element. To attempt to describe his activity in detail, however, would take us too far; he himself says but little about it, for the hundred pages of his diary dealing with the time from July, 1814, to May, 1815, give scarcely more than some insight into the social life of the congress. Suffice it to say, therefore, that in general he adhered to his ideas of 1814. In the beginning of 1815 he worked out a *Projet de Déclaration*, which has great similarity to the treaty of the Holy Alliance of September 16, 1815, if this be stripped of its specific religious character.[182] According to Gentz's own statement, this project was read to the Czar by Castlereagh toward the end of the congress, and the latter was moved to tears by it; it is, therefore, not

[181] *Ibid.*, 119 f., 127 f., 350.

[182] *Tagebücher*, I, 443 ff.

impossible that the declaration had a certain influence upon the conclusion of the Holy Alliance itself.

When Napoleon had returned from Elba, Gentz was entrusted with the drafting of a proscription against him.[183] Then war broke out anew; but before Europe had recovered its breath, the news of Waterloo and of the complete destruction of the imperial army arrived. Gentz seems to have taken a relatively small interest in the war, except that he was fearful of a further shifting of the balance of power in favor of Russia and Prussia. The news of Napoleon's escape from Elba came to him on March 7 through W. von Humboldt.[184] His sympathies were plainly divided, even inclining perhaps to Napoleon; he would have preferred to see the threatened renewal of the European conflict nipped in the bud and this with the least possible sensation. After Waterloo his fears got the upper hand; he praises Napoleon's attitude in the battle, of which Adam Müller had given him an inspiring description,[185] he criticises Blücher's and Wellington's march to Paris and protests against the restoration of the Bourbons.[186] He would gladly have seen a regency under Marie Louise, but finally does not oppose the recognition of Louis XVIII.[187] Called to Paris, he took part in the conclusion of peace, again guided by the desire to preserve as far as possible the integrity of France.

A half year later Gentz made public the motives which had actuated him during the peace negotiations and defended them against the angry Görres.[188] He is of the opinion that the principle of the European balance of power no longer demanded any additional weakening of France's position, as would result, for instance, from a

[183] *Ibid.*, I, 364.

[184] *Ibid.*, I, 363.

[185] *Briefw. zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, 180 ff.

[186] Metternich-Klinkowström, *Österreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen*, 664 f.

[187] *Ibid.*, 666 f. *Briefw. zw. Fr. Gentz u. A. H. Müller*, 203.

[188] Schlesier, II, 403.

forced concession of Alsace and Lorraine. The interests of an enduring European peace seem to him even to forbid such a step; for, he declares, if this step were to be taken, every king of France would, under the pressure of public opinion, seize the first opportunity of winning back what had been lost. This argument had, no doubt, much in its favor, for after 1870 France indeed followed the very policy that Gentz here foretells. On the other hand, there were important considerations against it, and these Gentz seems entirely to have overlooked: if France were allowed to keep Alsace and Lorraine, there would be no guarantee that the very possession of these provinces might not invite the French to make an attempt at winning the entire left bank of the Rhine. The whole question was, at that time, in a certain sense still an academic one, and not until the latter part of the nineteenth century was it made evident that here both men, Gentz as well as Görres, were equally in the right and equally in the wrong. It is, however, not impossible that in Gentz's case still other unexpressed motives may have been at work, as for instance those which aimed at bringing Austria in time into the good graces of the Bourbons.

Europe's struggle against its foremost man was now definitely ended. Napoleon himself sailed to St. Helena accompanied by a small suite, and there six years later he ended his unique life. The white banner of the Bourbons was floating once more from the Tuileries, for the king had again taken up his residence in the midst of his good people. Finally, the armies of the allies marched back to their garrisons and their homes. There was peace, at last, in all the lands, that sweet peace which so long had been hoped for. At spinning-parties, over their glasses, or at home by the warm fireside, however, people were telling for more than a generation of the strange hosts which, during the long years of war, had passed through the country; most of all, it is true, they told of him whose iron hand had been lying on Europe during these fifteen terrible and ever memorable years.

For Gentz too the struggle against his great enemy was now over, a struggle that, in its final stage, had hardly deserved this term. It never occurred to him to mourn his fate, and he passes over with indifference or scorn lamentations such as those of Las Cases, Montholon and Gourgaud. The era of Bonaparte, at last, belonged to the past and might so continue; now more important things were to be considered than the fate of the "ex-hero of the age." "You must know," Gentz writes in 1824, "that Bonaparte is as good as forgotten among us, and in Germany only a few curse or praise him, ... and they too not from conviction but from sheer malignity."[189]

The end of all struggle, however, had not yet come to Gentz. Although the great storm had subsided and a second Napoleon was not likely to appear in the immediate future, the revolutionary spirit had not been extinguished

[189] *Briefe v. u. a. Fr. v. Gentz,* II, 340 f.

entirely and soon Gentz thought that he heard the roll of thunder once more. Again he rushed into battle, but this time the struggle was to end differently. Europe had, after all, progressed during the last thirty years, and Gentz himself realized in time that "neither art nor force can stop the turn of the world-wheel"; so he became more and more depressed, especially after 1825, without, however, losing interest in life entirely. In 1831 he sums up the result of this second struggle against the revolutionary tendencies in the words: "I find myself . . . . suffering from an actual mentally diseased condition which is making noticeable progress in me. The chief features of this condition are continually recurring unrest and deep sorrow at the shaping of conditions which are driving us more and more to the wall,—the bitter consciousness that I can do nothing against it, that I am daily becoming more estranged from the new order of things, that my rôle is played and the fruit of forty years of labor as good as lost,—multiplied troubles, irreparable losses in my income brought on by political catastrophes,—my place in society which for some years I have too greatly cultivated and from which, now that I am tired of it since it disturbes me in the only pleasure I still have, I do not know how to free myself,—discontent with myself and with the world,—the feeling of increasing age and the fear of death which you, of course, know; are these not enough to make one sick?"[190]

Soon after this confession Gentz died, a weary and embittered man. For some time he seemed forgotten; then, however, he slowly rose once more out of this night of oblivion, and it is safe to say that his name will continue to be remembered. A historic figure of the first rank, it is true, he never was; one may even hesitate to give him second rank, since the influence which he exercised on the course of events has, after all, been but a small one. Judged by the whole make-up of his nature, however, he undoubtedly deserves to be called a very remarkable personage.

[190] Schlesier, I, 216 f.

His life extended over three distinct historic periods: those of the Revolution, of Napoleon and of the Reaction, and in all of them he had, fundamentally, one and the same aim: to fight against whatever was revolutionary and aggressive; but if we should attempt to find for him a place in history which would be his own more than any other, it could only be that of an opponent of the first Napoleon. Comparable to a brilliant comet the name of this extraordinary man stands on the firmament of historical fame, sending forth its lustre from age to age. There is the sparkling head: that is he himself, the little Caporal, the tamer of the Revolution, the Emperor; behind it, however, there follows an immense tail of duller light: the companions and enemies of the great conqueror, and with these, with the group of anti-Napoleonic *idéologues* Gentz must, more than with any other group or period, historically be classed.

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